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3DO Magazine

printed in the UK

ISSUE 4

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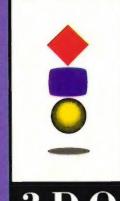
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M2

The full inside story on 3DO's 64bit next step.
We talk to developers to find out exactly why M2
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Reviewed: Wing Commander III, Syndicate,
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& Supreme Warrior.

Previewed: BattleSport, Zhadost The People's
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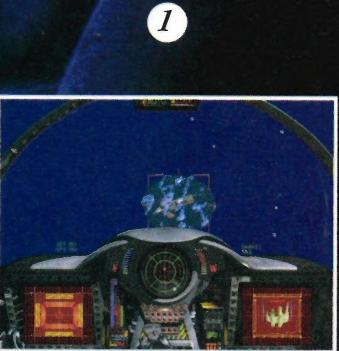
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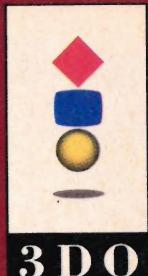


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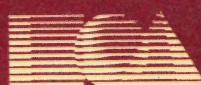
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W

ell it must be said that things are pretty slow at the moment with release dates for new titles being put back daily. There are so many

previews and our phones are constantly ringing with enquiries. It seems that out of all the current formats 3DO owners are by far the most enthusiastic. However disasters like 'Rise of the Robots' and 'Quarantine' have dampened the spirits somewhat. It's probably the best time to check out the quality secondhand titles that you just never got round to first time around; we're looking forward to the rush of goodies this Summer and we'll keep you posted.



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• The Syndicate disc will run in letterbox format on PAL systems.



3DO

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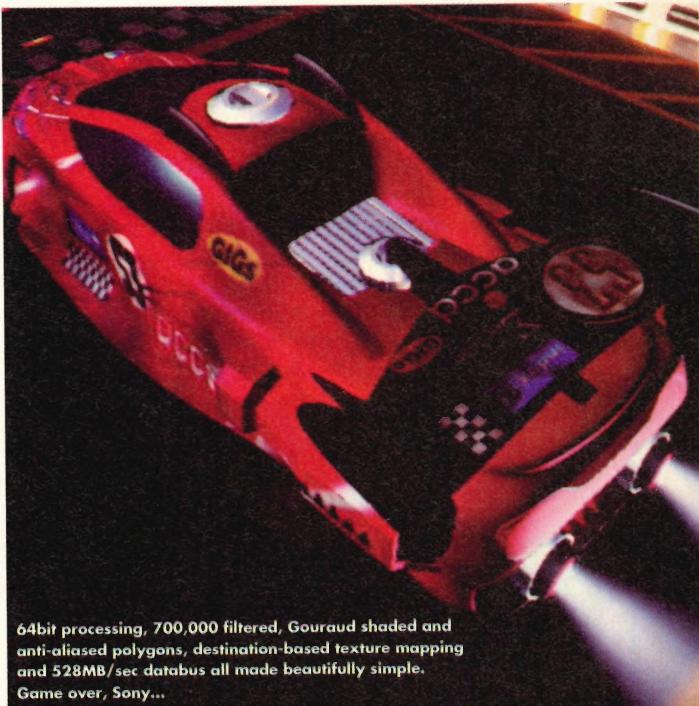
You know it makes sense, just look at those savings...

Software Directory 60

Every UK release is rated and incisively analysed.

Coming Soon 64

A mega-game packed roster of future release.



64bit processing, 700,000 filtered, Gouraud shaded and anti-aliased polygons, destination-based texture mapping and 528MB/sec databus all made beautifully simple.
Game over, Sony...





3DO UNVEIL M2

On May 2nd, The 3DO Company finally made public its next generation technology in briefings on both East and West coasts of America. In a bravura display of hi-tech wizardry and corporate muscle, few were left in any doubt the Company had made a giant leap in videogaming technology, one which its hardware partners are committed to delivering.

The briefings began in New York, where 3DO's CEO Trip Hawkins addressed press and industry analysts on "a quantum leap in both graphics speed and quality." The M2 system is based around an IBM PowerPC 602 processor and 10 revolutionary custom chips designed by 3DO. It will first be made available as an upgrade for existing 3DO systems, before being engineered into a standalone 3DO II console in 1996.

After Hawkins finished speaking, IBM's Phil Hester (General Manager, Systems and Technology Architecture Division) took the stage. He explained the chip's key elements and outlined how IBM and 3DO had worked together. Hawkins and Hester then joined a panel of senior executives from Panasonic, GoldStar, Motorola and Electronic Arts to underline broader support for the system. A similar briefing, in 3DO's California offices, featured executives from Universal Interactive Studios, Interplay Productions and Spectrum Holobyte (who also own MicroProse).

In the midst of fulsome support for M2, Steven Wienstein (Spectrum Holobyte's VP for Research and Development), perhaps best summed it up: The type of features discussed here today – Gouraud shading, filtered textures, 30 frames per second animation, and (Silicon Graphics) Onyx level performance, will take gamers into a new level of immersion."

The presentations were clearly timed to cause maximum impact on the plans of 3DO's competitors. The Sega Saturn, Sony PlayStation and Nintendo Ultra64 were all due to be launched at the Los Angeles E3 show, just nine days later. Obviously, Sony's bold boasting about the PlayStation's 360,000 polygon/sec performance is unlikely to seem quite so radical now M2's million plus specs have been announced. By the time PlayStation actually arrives on American shelves this September, 3DO clearly hope to make consumers aware its supposedly cutting edge technology has already been made obsolete.

To this end, the May 2nd briefings were merely Phase I in a three stage process. Phase II briefings will reveal specific products, hardware and software partners, plus M2 launch titles. Phase III will provide specific launch details, such as price, availability and distribution plans.

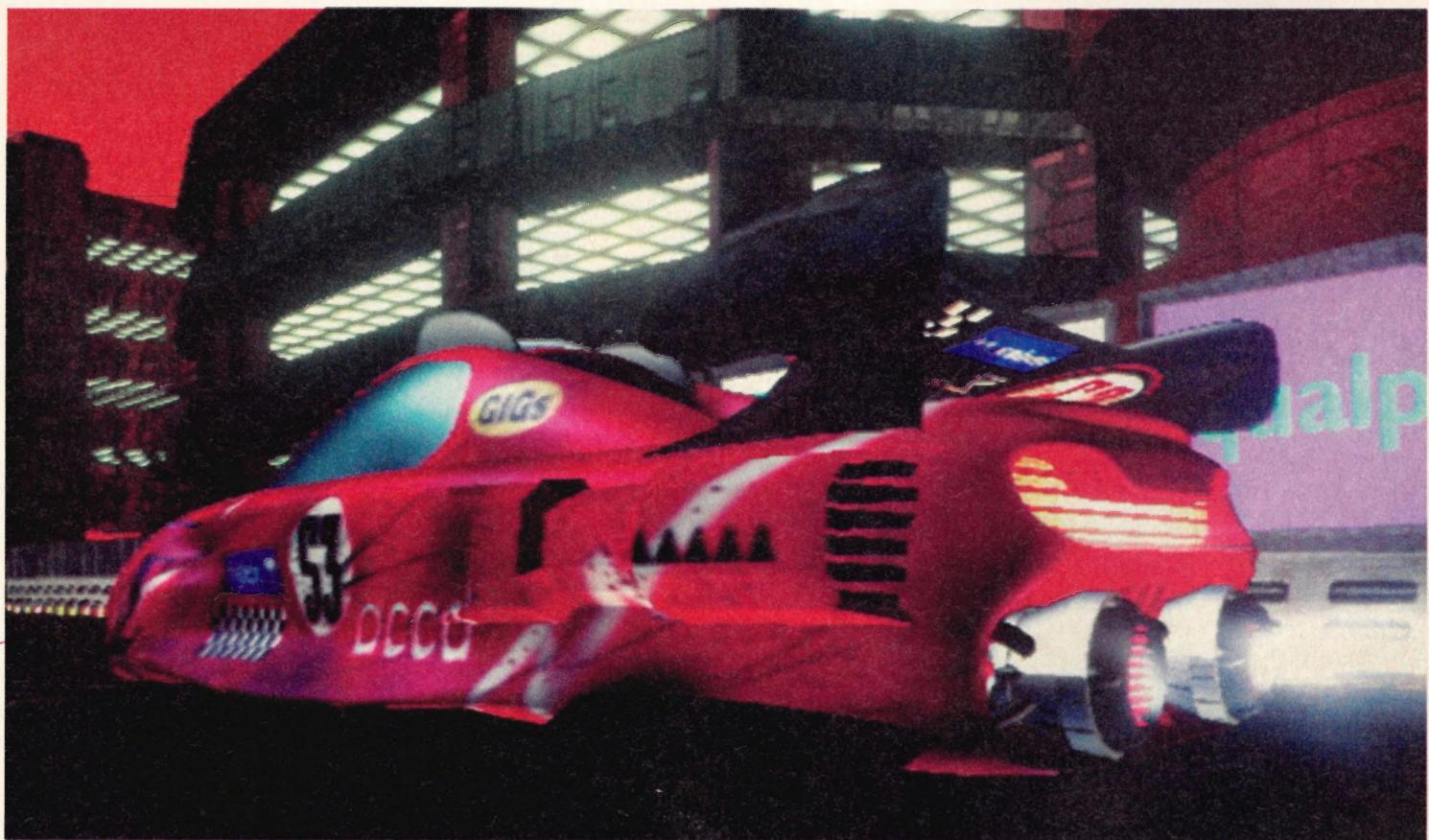
For analysts, the most impressive aspect of the M2 briefings wasn't the amazing graphics, but the incredible

range of heavyweight industry support. IBM and Motorola were plainly keen to ensure the machine's success, while rumours about Matsushita pulling out were quashed by a firm commitment to manufacture M2. Even the stock market was certainly impressed: the 3DO Company's stock price promptly rose by over 10%.

For more on M2, see pages 17-21.



While the yacht demo is technically superb with a beautifully animated polygon sea and Gouraud lighting effects on the cave wall, the car is the real showstopper. Remember, this isn't an SGI intro, but a real demonstration of the graphics M2 can produce in-game. As independent developers have remarked, M2's capabilities far exceed any current coin-op.



MEGA-CD

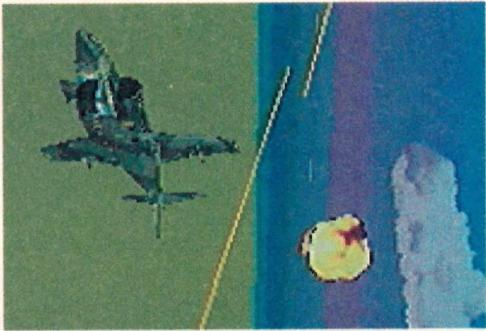
Over in America, 3DO has released its best demo disc yet. *Sampler Disc 3* is headlined by *Wing Commander III*, which ironically has delayed the PAL release due to an incompatibility glitch. Nevertheless, there's plenty of other great stuff such as playable levels from *PO'd*, *Return Fire*, *Pataank*, *MegaRace*, *Shanghai: Triple Threat* and the original *Station Invasion*. *Slopestyle* provides a short FMV lesson on snowboarding, while *Gex* and *Slam 'N' Jam* provide impressive, but non-interactive demos.

Probably the most intriguing demo is Domark's *Flying*



Nightmares. This includes a stunning intro sequence and a complete mission on autopilot. To keep the viewer occupied, he or she can fire weapons and select an exterior view, with the joypad panning the camera around your aircraft. Texture maps haven't yet been applied to all surfaces, but there's full light sourcing and the Harrier's basic camouflage is superb. Expect great things when it's released in July.

Obviously, we'd have loved to have covermounted this disc but – before you all write in to complain – buying the rights from 3DO would've raised the coverprice quite dramatically. So if you want a copy, check out your local 3DO dealer now!



YEN KILLS PSX DREAM?

The European onslaught of the PlayStation and Saturn has suffered a serious setback due to the steep rise in the value of the Yen. While Panasonic has long insisted it's actually taking a loss on a 3DO at £400, Sega and Sony's ambitions for huge sales have rested on driving their machines' prices far lower. That now seems even more unlikely; the Saturn's target price of £349 is widely expected to rise to £400, possibly £425.

Speaking in trade newspaper CTW, Sega UK's former boss, Frank Herman, acknowledged Sega's problems. "I don't necessarily see Sega being in the hardware business in the long term... We're not a box manufacturer, we haven't got any bloody factories, how can we compete with Matsushita, Sony, Philips and those guys?"

Herman went on to suggest Sega could license its technology to other manufacturers for mass production, something which seems unlikely considering Sega's lack of genuinely world-class R&D. The Saturn has been licensed to both Hitachi and JVC, but their machines are generally regarded as niche products. A more likely future for Sega is as a multi-format publisher, something Herman was keen to promote with Sega's recent move into PC CD-ROM.

While Sega has always had concerns over selling a CD machine into the mass market, hence 32X, Sony has never wavered in its commitment to the format. Last year, industry hype was about a £250 machine, with CD royalties low enough to allow for cheap games and big profits. The rise in the Yen shattered the first part of that dream – current predictions are for a £350

PlayStation – while the second part has been destroyed by European publishing arrangements which have shocked software houses. One publisher, quoted in CTW, commented that Sony had "given us plenty of development systems, but maybe if we'd known the royalty would be £m20 we'd have done something else."

At £m20 (\$15), producing a PlayStation CD will cost about the same as a 16bit cartridge with similarly narrow profit margins. Also causing substantial irritation are the contracts themselves, leading one developer to complain he knew how "George Michael felt."

To ease the pain, Sony have promised a big ad spend later this year, but getting the PlayStation cheap enough to sell the big quantities many expected won't be easy. Chris Deering, president of Sony Computer Entertainment (Europe), recently admitted "At the moment, [the launch] is a bit like a short blanket, you cover your head and your feet stick out at the bottom."

The 3DO Company has, of course, long predicted these problems. Unlike Sony, 3DO has a flat, worldwide rate which works out at just \$7 (including average CD production). 3DO Marketing Manager John Edelson pointed out that "there's been a lot of wishful thinking by publishers... now the reality behind the dream's emerging and it turns out Sony want to be another Nintendo with high royalties and product approval. They want the business to be the way it was five years ago, and to be honest it just wasn't that profitable for software houses."



E3 MEGA-GAMES

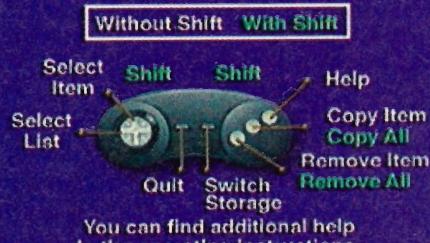
Just as we were going to press, The 3DO Company made public a stunning new roster of software to be unveiled at E3. Some of the games are featured in our Coming Soon section, but many are entirely new titles held back from announcement until now. We'll have a full breakdown of the titles next issue, but for now drool over these prospective mega-games due later this year: *Absolute Zero* (Domark), *AD&D Deathkeep* (SSI), *Castle* (Trilobyte), *Cyberdillo* (Panasonic), *Deadly Skies* (JVC), *Discworld* (Psychosis), *Fast Draw Show Down* (American Laser Games), *Foes Of Ali* (EA), *Fire & Ice* (GoldStar), *Firewall* (GoldStar), *Isis: Earth, Wind & Fire* (Panasonic), *The Last Bounty Hunter* (EA), *Lemmings Chronicles* (Psychosis), *Lost Vikings* (Interplay), *Mazer* (American Laser Games), *McKenzie & Company* (American Laser Games), *Nevada '51* (EA), *NHL '96* (EA), *Olympic Soccer* (US Gold), *Penn & Teller* (Absolute), *Prowler* (Origin), *Rock 'N' Roll Racing* (Interplay), *Shock Wave II* (EA), *Sound Byte Cafe* (EA), *Strahl* (Panasonic), *Varuna's Forces* (JVC), *Vikings* (MicroProse) and *Virtual Stadium Baseball* (EA). There are also a host of new games from fresh start-up companies such as Atlantis Interactive (*Mirage*), Cerebre (*Eye Spy*), Crystal Oasis (*Rad The Rock Hopper*), Meta Design (*In Your Face*) and Orion (*Chopper Assault*). Remembering what new start-up Any Channel are achieving with PO'ed, these could deserve as much attention as more well known publishers!

MEMORY MATTERS

Panasonic have finally shipped the FZ-EM256 memory expansion in Japan. It plugs into the rear expansion port and provides a whopping 256K for you to store old save games on, freeing up internal NVRAM for newer games. To use the unit you need to load in a Storage Manager off a supplied CD. Besides allowing you to back-up individual files, you can back-up your entire 32K memory with a single command. Thankfully, NTSC units are compatible with PAL machines.

In fact, the only drawback is price – ¥14,000 (£100) – and importers will add on plenty of overheads. This is one reason Panasonic UK doubt they'll bring the unit over officially. Their opinion is that existing memory is adequate for most people, while M2's PCMCIA save card system will solve longer term problems far more effectively than FZ-EM256.

3DO™ Storage Manager



MOVIE MAGIC

Playing movies on your computer or console has long been a centrepiece of the much abused 'multimedia' buzzword. Unfortunately, like most such buzzwords, the reality has lagged a long way behind the hype. The VideoCD standard has been heartily embraced by Philips [CDi] and Commodore [CD32], but other manufacturers have been more cautious. Below we explain the delay of 3DO's VideoCD capability in Europe, and look ahead to VideoCD's eventual replacement.

MPEG 4 M2

VideoCD has become something of a sore spot with 3DO. While Panasonic were quick to bring out an NTSC upgrade for the FZ-1, a PAL version has been endlessly delayed. Even GoldStar, who originally promised an upgrade would be available as soon as their 3DO hit the streets in May, have put the adaptor on hold. Part of the problem has been Philips' tardiness over introducing the new, Version 2.0 software which offers enhanced controls such as improved freeze-frame – and the removal of PAL/NTSC incompatibilities. Another hitch has been the fact all the various NTSC 3DO upgrades are incompatible. GoldStar's 3DO has power routed through its AV port, so their upgrade fits snuggly inside a special compartment. By contrast, Panasonic's FZ-1 upgrade not only requires a powerpack, but its shape makes it impossible to fit onto the FZ-10 – hence two Panasonic VideoCD adaptors.

In Japan and America the units have proved quite popular. Multimedia PCs and Philips CDi has led to an ever increasing range of movies, TV shows and pop videos, plus there's the inevitable market for pornographic material. So why yet more delays over a PAL VideoCD upgrade?

Well, for once it appears its due to hardware manufacturers being concerned about their customers. What they knew and customers didn't, is that M2 has MPEG built-in. In the more costly European market, Panasonic decided asking £200 for a VideoCD unit only six months or so before M2 arrived wasn't really on. Unless M2 suddenly gets hit by unforeseen delays, there's virtually no chance Panasonic or GoldStar will release a stand-alone MPEG upgrade in Europe.

The decision to build MPEG1 into M2 comes as the

format enjoys something of a resurgence. Software support is increasing, while a variety of new VideoCD players – some with multi-CD carousels – have sold well in Japan and are due for wider distribution later this year. VideoCD has long been seen as a stopgap format, but confusion over DVD has significantly delayed its 'obsolescence'.

While cinephiles will look forward to the new capability, the main significance for gamers is that by building it into M2 as standard, it should gain universal support from developers. Obviously the potential for movie conversions and FMV-spoiled games such as *Creature Shock* is superb, but the really exciting thing is the way it's integrated into the chipset. M2's amazing 528Mb/sec bandwidth will allow for some potentially stunning realtime manipulation of MPEG footage alongside more conventional game graphics.

For more on M2's fantastic potential, see page 17-21.

VIDEOCD II?

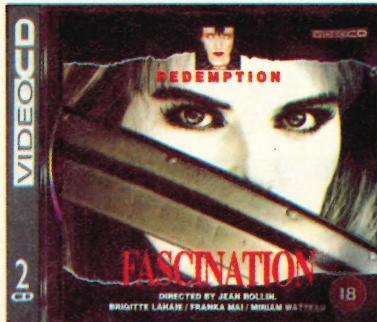
While VideoCDs slowly expand across high street shelves, its long promised successor is struggling to take shape. As expected, the format will be based around the MPEG2 compression standard, offering at least 270 minutes of broadcast quality playing time per disc plus multiple audio tracks for digital surround sound and multilingual dialogue. Other than this, the format's specs are rather loose since there are in fact two competing systems!

Sony and Philips, who developed both audio compact disc and the MPEG1 based VideoCD, have a system which

layers multiple datatracks on one side of a CD. Toshiba's system, by contrast, achieves similar capacity by using both sides of a CD. The latter system has the advantage of a higher data transfer rate, 4.69 Megabits/sec as compared to 3.6 Megabits/sec, but its principal edge is industry support. Backers already include Time-Warner, Matsushita, Pioneer, Hitachi, Thomson and MCA.

At one stage it was thought Sony/Philips would simply give up – neither side want a costly rerun of Betamax vs VHS, but it now turns out if they do abandon their system they'll demand hefty compensation. There's also talk of combining elements of both systems, which makes a 1996 launch distinctly unlikely. If it does arrive then, expect it to appear in America first for around \$1000. These high prices, and the lack of a record function, mean the system's unlikely to become a real mass market machine until the year 2000.

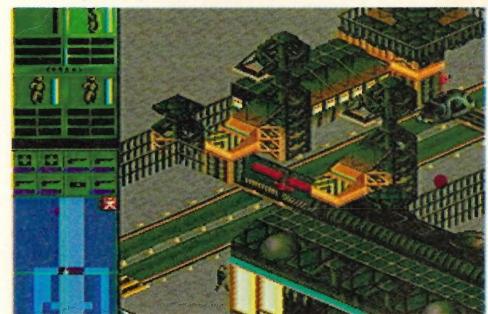
For the videogames industry the system's impact is even harder to predict. Despite the hype about MPEG2 upgrades for consoles such as the Atari Jaguar, the new system's laser spec is far in excess of all existing consoles. The next, next generation of consoles could possibly incorporate the new technology but even in four years' time will costs have fallen low enough? And what of software developers already crippled by production costs on filling a standard CD? As ever, the only certain thing about the future is that nothing's certain!



CD DEMO GUIDE

Instructions for Syndicate Demo CD

This classic of cyberpunk noir gaming has already been a huge hit on Amiga and PC, but the 3DO version is the best yet. In the game, you lead a corporation – or syndicate – bent on world domination. Setting taxes and researching high technology are important tasks, but your main route to success is through assassination and subversion missions. Our cover CD features one whole mission, fully playable and exceptionally violent!



GETTING STARTED

To use your demo, simply insert it into your 3DO as normal. A superb intro will set the scene for the game, which can be aborted by pressing any button. A copyright screen will then come up, followed by screenshots of a world map (for planning your bid for global domination), R&D (for researching new weapons) and an arming up screen (with a massive choice of exceptionally powerful firepower). These screens are NOT interactive, but merely an indication of the full game's sophistication. Pressing any button will skip these, but watch out for your mission objectives. In-game you have just two agents – the full game has a maximum of four – and they're already fully equipped with weapons. Good luck!

MISSION CONTROLS

Walk to Cursor: A

Access Weapons Bar: B

Fire Weapon: C

Group Mode: X

Pause: P

Select Agent: Dpad + Right Shift

Scroll View: Dpad + Left Shift

Swap Scanner Mode: A + B + Left Shift

Move View to Agent: C + Right Shift

Select API* Level: A + Up/Down + Right Shift

Alter API Level: A + Left/Right + Right Shift

Panic Mode (rapidfire all directions): Left & Right Shift buttons

Self Destruct: A + B + C + Left Shift

*API: Adrenaline, Perception & Intelligence. These affect reaction times, shooting accuracy and tactical smarts. As they're all controlled by drugs, you can alter each of them in-game.

WEAPONS BAR

De/Select Weapon: A, B or C.

Drop Weapon: Left Shift or Right Shift.

IMPORTANT

If your demo fails to load, return it to 3DO Disc 4 Returns, Paragon Publishing, Paragon House, St. Peter's Road, Bournemouth BH1 2JS. Remember to include your full address and we'll have a replacement out to you as soon as possible.

SYNDICATE

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Price: £44.99

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GALLUP CHART

Week ending 29th April



1	Gex	BMG Interactive
2	Return Fire	Studio 3DO
3	Need For Speed	E.A.
4	FIFA Soccer	E.A.
5	Flashback	US Gold
6	Super SFLIX	Panasonic
7	Theme Park	E.A.
8	Super Wing Commander	E.A.
9	Alone In The Dark	Infogrames
10	Night Trap	Virgin

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mega means more

music+video+games



MEGA
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WORLD

....D....

DEVELOPER: WARP

An enormous smash in Japan, *D* features some of the most stunning FMV graphics to be seen on a video game, the beautiful design compensating in full for the rather linear plot in this atmospheric adventure.

The stylishly directed opening sequence reveals the rain swept landscape of Los Angeles, 1997, with police cars and helicopters swarming around a searchlight bathed hospital. Inside, a massacre has taken place, with artistically composed corpses littering the noiseless corridors, whilst in a small side room, a final victim is spectacularly dispatched by a gunman.

We cut away to your character, an attractively dressed young woman arriving at the hospital, the smooth glass doors drifting aside to reveal the carnage within. The point-of-view camera, hovering and circling uncertainly across the bloodshed, cuts to a reaction shot of 'you'; hands to your troubled face. The brilliant fashion with which director Kenji Eno has designed this character



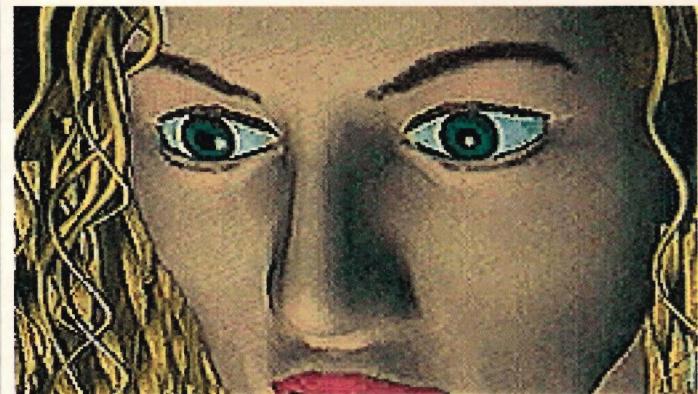
become evident. The face is simply drawn, rounded and soft, her expressions convincingly and delicately played across her face with smoothly enlarging eyes and subtle lines and contours vividly conveying 'your' reactions..

Just as you're wondering at the strange beauty of the composition, a prism of light washes across the hospital reception, and the structure morphs into a Victorian mansion. The glass doors

mutates into a sturdy, wooden barrier to exit, and the adventure has begun.

Unlike the step by step stills of *Myst*, *D* lowers the resolution slightly but offers continuous movement. Nudge to move forward and the first person perspective smoothly updates, with a

pre-set number of positions in each location you can actually stand. This makes play slightly easier, as areas of the game which hold no advantage in exploring are, basically, inaccessible. Move towards an object, say a chest of drawers, and click to search, and



the view switches to a cut-away of your hand opening a drawer, zooming in to get a better view of the contents. Keys and items collected are easily accessed via a scrolling menu, and a sweeping musical score punctuates the correct implementation of an object.

To begin with, however, mundane problem solving is a distraction from the beauty of the locations, each room is delightfully detailed with authentic furniture and fittings. Everywhere is packed with attention grabbing curios – paintings on the wall shape shift and mutate to

reveal horrific clues, sombre busts transform into nightmarish visions, bowls of soup, when peered into, mist into the colour of blood – but they're never irrelevant to the adventure, invariably offering some precipitation of what lies ahead. It's not just the imaginative inclusion of these original clues that impresses, it's the extraordinary slickness with which they're composed and directed, with music and lighting all enhanc-



ing the atmosphere to a stunning pitch. Perhaps the most extraordinary sequence happens early on, when you walk towards a seemingly dark wall, only to catch sight of yourself, reflected in a mirror, edging hesitantly towards yourself. As you stare, transfixed by your own, haunted reflection, faint ripples in your face are replaced by an enormous, grasping hand that pushes through the reflection, grabbing then retreating. Again, music and cut-aways are powerfully implemented to telegraph the emotional state, along with your own terrified face, conjuring an atmosphere of danger and excitement quite unique.

Even the most mundane of adventuring features is revolutionised in *D*. One object you already have before entering the mansion/hospital is a compact mirror, which can be used to gain clues. Flip it open, and light washes over your face, the small round mirror becomes opaque, then a shadowy view of your next essen-

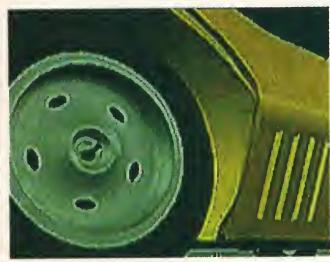
A QUESTION OF STANDARDS...

While generally speaking it's best to get the game intended for your 3DO system, the 3DO standard is a worldwide one and, unlike competing systems, you should be able to play a disc from anywhere in the world on your own PAL system. Although software houses can make games specific to different TV standards, generally speaking 3DO is encouraging companies to develop universal standard games which not only run on all systems, but vary their screen size and speed accordingly. In the meantime you should be aware of some problems to watch out for.

While both Japan and America use the NTSC TV system, Britain has PAL which has a higher screen resolution but runs slightly slower with less frames per second. To get NTSC games to run on PAL, videogame consoles generally slow them down to get the frame rate in sync and make them run in 'letterbox' format with borders around the screen. Official PAL versions of 3DO games should, unless otherwise stated, be recoded so borders are smaller or non-existent and often the game speed is increased. The PAL version of *Super Street Fighter II Turbo*, for example, has been sped up so that it runs just the same speed as the NTSC one.

A handful of import games won't work on a PAL system at all though. Interplay's original, American version *Way Of The Warrior* uses routines tailored to the NTSC systems, while some Japanese games use kanji (Japanese script) routines specific to Japanese 3DO systems. However, these games are exceptions to the rule and in the future even fewer games will be incompatible with PAL. Similarly, for NTSC owners most PAL games will work fine but there are some exceptions such as the fullscreen PAL *Soccer Kid* and *Alone In The Dark*.

tial location shimmers into view. Each time you use the compact, however, the mirror cracks slightly, eventually shattering if its powers are over-used. This thrilling way of imparting clues is quite extraordinary, and the visual help is handy in this Japanese game where aural chants and mumblings are obviously unintelligible. We managed to get to the second disc of this adventure, however, without being hindered by the language barrier, but the chief downfall of *D* is its simplicity. Puzzles are fairly obvious, with objects generously hidden near to their solution, and there are next to no red herrings to distract you. Obviously, the phenomenal expense of creating these wondrous FMV sequences means that there would be little incentive to design non-essential areas to make the game bigger, but consequently, and much like the similar *Alone In The Dark*, *D* is a short lived, albeit captivating affair. It's impossible to die, as you're left to progress with your only real enemy being a time limit, which allows long pauses for thought (it's a great game to get someone helping out with the puzzles on). Action scenes, such as boulders chasing you down stairs, are watched rather than interacted with, yet the exemplary design never leaves you feeling uninvolved. With strong rumours of a European release being commissioned, *D* will be one to look out for, but genre fans eager for a truly sumptuous adventure will be certain to search out the import version of this great title now. mcw



The key to success is thorough investigation of the furniture and surroundings of the mysterious manor (right). An impressive, gory intro sequence, below, sets the scene perfectly.

SLOPESTYLE

DEVELOPER: L3
INTERACTIVE



This product is a pure information interface, offering no 'game' interaction whatsoever, but, instead, FMV demonstrations of every snow boarding trick in the book. A cult pastime in America and Canada, snow boarding is the peculiar art of strapping one short, wide ski to both feet and performing athletic leaps and bounds over snow; a sort of skateboarding minus the wheels. It sounds and looks fairly unexciting as new age sports go, but the demonstrators all seem very enthusiastic and dash through each stunt with rock star gusto, pausing occasionally to pose with a handy babe (hey, it's not



just a boy and his board you know), against an undoubtedly hip soundtrack of rap and guitar rubbish.

The novelty of this package (and its advantage over a traditional video tutori-

al), is that each stunt and technique can be pulled in any order from the Interactive Learning Cube, a sub-divided block that can be spun and rotated to reveal whatever tutorial you feel like watching. Select a facet, wait for the info to be pulled off disc, and then watch a three or four minute slice of footage of whatever takes your fancy. Click onto text instructions or flip back to the main cube to pick another.

The FMV quality is good, although the producers seem a touch over influenced by 'daring' video rebels like REM, with home movie style designer glitches and >

colour bleeds soon grating on the nerves. On the plus side, fast forward and rewind facilities are available, and occasionally some overlaid graphics are applied to explain the athletics in more detail, no doubt essential for the sofa bound snow boarding dude.

It's all done with the utmost professionalism, and although slow access times to each tutorial can get tiresome, as a learning device this is credibly successful. However, there can't be more than forty-five minutes of actual video footage, making this an expensive alternative to a standard video tape tutorial, and whilst the potential of the learning cube interface for similar products is great, this snow boarding 'how do they do that?' is unlikely to shift too many units on these shores. mcw

MATHEMAGICS

DEVELOPER: L3 INTERACTIVE

And the same Interactive Learning Cube reappears in L3's *Mathemagics*, an entertainment title more suited, perhaps, to the format. Promising to awaken the maths wizard within you, this is squarely aimed at the student phobic of text books. *Mathemagics* features three skill levels, split into a variety of explanations and



demos. The emphasis is squarely on practical implementation of maths, rather than frightening theory of absolute logic, with Mathemagician Arthur Benjamin, a young whiz to be sure, wandering around shops and zoos (don't ask) demonstrating various situations where a familiarity with numerical manipulation is damn essential.

A good feature of this headache inducing package, is the frequent introduction of 'cheats' to help you remember dry formulae, although the very best section is on memory itself, and how to phonetically convert numbers so that they can be recalled more easily. It made no sense to me, but Arthur was very convincing as he rattled out amusing, surrealistic visuals to accompany his brain boggling technique.

This is suitable for primary school stu-



dents to A level standards then, demoing across square roots, casting out nines (?), magic squares, sevens and 11's (?) and much more. However, a severe inadequacy is the inability to try sums for yourself, and get marked by the program. It would be a simple enough task for the programmers, and would have made much more sense than just watching and taking notes, but, this flaw aside, this L3 package successfully communicates many secrets of maths in a clear and friendly fashion, and if not priced prohibitively, could be worth considering for budding number crunchers. mcw

CASINO COWBOY

DEVELOPER: INTELIPLAY

While in-game graphics are average, periodic cowboy-themed clips provide both atmosphere and humour. The game itself is a beginner's guide to Five Card Draw, Five Card Stud, Seven Card Stud and Texas Hold-'em. The educational side is mainly limited to a book supplied with the package, but the game is a good way of practising what you learn – albeit with some idiosyncratic American rules. ssw

SPACE SHUTTLE

DEVELOPER: SOFTWARE TOOLWORKS

The 3DO's superb FMV capabilities and endless miles of Space Shuttle film footage could've made for an excellent multimedia package. Sadly, this disappointing package never even remotely looks like it could clear the launch tower of quality entertainment. Quite firmly rooted in the terra firma of uninspired banality, the mediums being mixed are



mainly confined to static photos, artwork and a drab voice-over. What FMV there is in the package is limited to brief clips presented in tiny windows – which certainly helps develop those squint muscles!

The package is structured around three main sections: Orientation (background info), Training (tedious crew info) and Mission Launch (a rundown on first fifty missions). Considering the endless controversy which has surrounded the shuttle, making its background so dull is a substantial achievement. Rather than bothering with the X series of aircraft which researched it, the numerous esoteric designs which got savagely cut back to



today's relatively conservative design, the whole debate over manned flight and, of course, the Challenger disaster, all we get is some funding dates and waffle about cutting costs – ignoring the fact that unmanned rockets such as Ariane and Titan are regarded as far cheaper. The accompany pictures are occasionally quite good, but considering the 3DO's capability for full screen, true colour pictures these are disappointingly small and fail to impress.

The package reaches its nadir with Mission Launch which is a cripplingly dull listing of each mission's objectives and crew with a tiny FMV clip. If you want to know exactly what payload was launched with mission 26 (a second NASA Tracking and Relay Satellite – oh, and an evaporator seized up so the cabin temperate got a bit uncomfortable – this is for you). Although be aware mission 27, like many others, is classified due to military cargo.

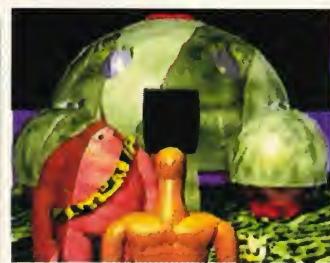
Overall, this makes an excellent case for why Captain Picard always has plenty of 'dead wood' artefacts, e.g. books, in his cabin on the Enterprise! ssw

DRAGON TYCOON

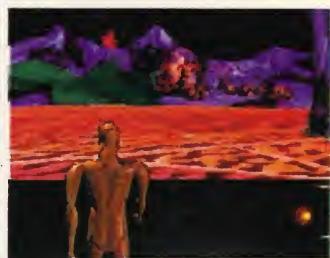
DEVELOPER: SALA INTERNATIONAL

With Japanese text and an audio soundtrack, this role-playing adventure is unlikely to win any fans on import, but the high quality visuals and truly bizarre set-

ting suggest a high quality game that could deserve translating for a British release.



The introductory sequence is fairly indecipherable, but the well styled action is heavy on pseudo religious symbolism, winding down to the dispatching of your principle character on a brightly coloured moon. The back of your figure is visible, as you move in any of the four possible directions, attempting to traverse lakes patrolled by mutations and bridges guarded by aliens, with health and stamina points collected for using magic or weaponry to defeat hostile aliens. The actual movement is rather jerky, but the visuals maintain a pull and a huge variety of locations are available for the committed explorer. Associates and allies can be picked up en route, and used in Powers Kingdom fashion to exploit individual strengths, but death is frequent and unfair at first, with unavoidable traps that must be memorised for future reference, and defeat is common in fights until stamina is collected.



This lacks the predominately visual interface that makes the foreign language D perfectly playable, being too text heavy to be approached by all but the most committed of RPG fans unfamiliar with Japanese. However, it promises some real excitement and is a perfect example of the exploding RPG 3DO genre in Japan at the moment, solutions bursting from dedicated magazines. If you're feeling particularly adventurous check it out, but otherwise keep an eye on **3DO Magazine** for news of an English language version, as with some work, this could be an interesting title. □ mcw



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John Edelson

Spinmeister Supreme

Whatever his official job title, John Edelson is really 3DO's chief spindocor for Europe. One ally compared Edelson to the Monty Python knight who dismisses losing an arm as a 'mere scratch'. He's certainly a true believer, but it's a belief based on inside knowledge rather than blind PR faith. After heading up 3DO's Developer Relations department he knows the hardware inside out, and has a keen understanding of the software community. As a prime mover behind okaying 3DO Magazine, we also think he's a genius on the magazine business too!

Why did you decide to join 3DO?

"I was initially recruited by SGI engineers who had joined 3DO. It looked fun because while SGI had gotten big, pushing \$1 billion then, 3DO was a raw start-up. It's always been my dream to get in early on a wild, crazy start-up ride. With 3DO going from raw start-up to public company with 400 people and the world-leading advanced CD games format has been... not disappointing!"

How would you compare working at Silicon Graphics with 3DO?

"Working at pioneering entrepreneurial high tech companies is exciting. Both SGI and 3DO fit this description. Both produce advanced technology using a unique vision. Both are out in front with others following."

What would you say is your main expertise?

"An understanding of how to work with developers, a fantastic amount of energy, a desire to travel, a willingness to live with the natives... need I go on?"

"Seriously, I guess my expertise is developer support.

You see, when you go to talk to a developer about a new format there's this big charade about it being a business thing. You put on a suit, the developers put on suits. You're acting like grown-ups talking about all the business side of things. But about halfway through the meeting the MD will turn to his engineering VP and ask if he's got any questions. This is the first critical decision moment. If you just mouth meaningless technical waffle or, worse, hesitate, the developers will feel in their gut you're not the sort of company which is excited about their product - so maybe they shouldn't be either.

The thing to do is smile and start talking about what exactly 3DO can do. You've got to be enthusiastic and, at the same time, reflect an understanding of the problems they face and how to get around them. Do that, and the developers will look for a business reason to support you. The MD probably still does a few lines of code now and then, that's where his real interest is. It's a great game, a bit of a charade, where you really have to balance the heart and the head - hardware and business opportunities."

Who are you most proud of signing up for 3DO?

"Riechart of Silent Software! It was a bitch. He's been developing for so long and burnt every which way. His brain was particularly well developed so we had to work through a lot of his business concerns before he'd commit. I can't say how many details had to be ironed out. But now *Return Fire*'s a bestseller, so it was all worthwhile."

Do you think 3DO underestimated how difficult it would be for people to produce 32bit CD games? Will 64bit games be any easier?



"32bit CD games are hard to produce. I think much of the difficulty is from the complexity of production, new technology, and unclear customer needs. For example, take *Return Fire*. It breaks most of the rules that have so far been considered important in 32bit CD games. No video intro. Classical music. Subtle graphics. Yet it is the biggest hit of the year and customers rave about it. It shows people how the technology can be used without throwing in a lot of video and throwing around a lot of polygons in a self consciously conspicuous and ineffective way."

"32bit CD games are hard, probably harder than we realised. 64bit CD games are not necessarily harder since I think it's the complexity of production and customer needs which were more difficult than the actual technology shift."

Will CD machines ever become mass market in the way the NES or Mega Drive were?

"The 16bit consoles are cheap to make: no CD drive and no memory. Easy for them to get into a lot of kids' hands. Advanced CD system have memory and CD drives: necessarily more expensive but with more potential. I think a generation of machines which incorporated



Besides being Studio 3DO's bestselling European game, *Return Fire* is also a testament to Edelson's persistence in Developer Support where he helped persuade Silent Software to support 3DO.

FMV, like M2 does, might make it like the VCR or PC have done. It would get the first million sales as a games machine, but then the broader range of capabilities – like the PC or VCR – would carry the heavier price into and beyond the same sales volumes as the cartridge machines."

What's your favourite 3DO game?

"The Horde, FIFA, Alone In The Dark and obviously Return Fire! I also really love these cool preproduction versions I have of BladeForce and Killing Time, they're great."

What's your favourite Trip Hawkins story?

"Well, during one of my first trips for 3DO to Europe I had to email California. It was 3am in the morning over there and Trip emailed back five minutes later! That was October '92 and Trip was working developer hours, basically 24 hours a day. He was personally running Studio 3DO and trying to arrange finance. It was incredible."

"Another time, when I'd just joined, I gave this developer a briefing when I wasn't quite up to speed on it all. Briefing didn't go that well, but I hoped no-one would know. About two hours later Trip calls around to ask why it went wrong. Trip freaks me out sometimes, he knows everything!"

Some sceptics have suggested M2 proves that the original 3DO I was underspecified.

"Not true, 3DO I marked a big revolution from 16bit consoles: from lousy beep, beep sound effects to routine

use of Dolby surround and Q sound for wonderful soundtracks. From 16 colours to full colour. From limited sprites and little characters to great graphics and stunning, interactive cinematic sequences. From basically 2D games to the routine creation of 3D, texture mapped environments. There's no doubt 3DO pioneered a revolutionary approach to videogaming which it's proven is both viable and popular. Both PlayStation and Saturn are "like a 3DO only..." there's this or that minor improvement. But, when you look at them as a group,

"There's no doubt 3DO pioneered a revolutionary approach to videogaming which it's proven is both viable and popular."

they are very similar machines – with the exception that 3DO was the first to market with over 175 titles published worldwide, and over 60 here in the UK."

Some UK developers are very wary about M2, claiming 3DO I never lived up to the fantastic hype.

"At the time we were publicising the 3DO system, the company was going public and everything we said was scrutinised by NASDAQ [the US stock market organisation]. We had to be very meticulous about our commitments and we've delivered on them. A lot of people projected expectations on 3DO way beyond what we'd claimed, simply because it was so exciting. It's natural for people to do that, but hardware never lives up to those sort of overblown fantasies – well, except for M2!



"So, just as with 3DO I, we're 100% committed to anything that's published by ourselves – which obviously includes the detailed M2 specs. As for the release date, I can only say it will definitely be out in the United States and Japan in 1995."

Do you foresee getting a European manufacturer?

"GoldStar and Panasonic are both really big, really powerful global brands. But as for a European-based brand – well, I hope so."

A lot of the UK press have been very hostile about 3DO, why do you think this is?

"A lot of people in the UK have been very enthusiastic, especially those that have bought a 3DO. Game press, TV, Teletext support has been pretty good. Return Fire, for example, is Digitiser's number one game of the year so far. The games industry voted 3DO best hardware of the year at the Spring ECTS. And all the mags have acknowledged the strength of games like Return Fire, FIFA, Striker, John Madden, SSF2T, Samurai, Alone In The Dark, Demolition Man, Gex, Road Rash, Shock

Wave and WCII.

"Some mags, admittedly, have been lukewarm but even they are slowly coming round to accept 3DO is actually a pretty big success. After all, we've got the high rating in customer satisfaction of any hardware platform."

"So how do I explain bad press? Sun spots, unnatural disasters, astrology. Frankly, they build us up and tear us down and we take it all with a grain of salt since, more importantly, the customers and stores are consistently enthusiastic."

What's been the best and the worst parts of promoting 3DO in Europe?

"Worst parts: being stuck in traffic when I'm supposed to be at a store in Birmingham: interviews with Edge, and the limited hardware supply so far since the other parts of the world took up all the factory capacity."

Best parts: 3DO MAGAZINE, talking to customers and retailers, seeing the new software coming out, and being on a winning team playing *FIFA*."

Which machine will sell the most machines in 1995?

"3DO, without a doubt. Look, every day, customers are walking into Virgin, Calculus, Futurezone, Game, the independents and – soon – Silica and big High Street chains. If they buy an advanced CD system today, they buy 3DO. We get 100% of the sales, 100% of the market share. Try as Sega and Sony and Nintendo might, they cannot delay everybody's purchase until they hit the market. They're desperate to do it, but they can't and all the customers are buying today is 3DO."

"This Fall, competition arrives. 3DO market share drops from 100%. Does it drop to 60%? 40%? 25%? I don't know for certain. But the customers will arrive in the store and find maybe 100 3DO titles on the shelf, maybe 150. I don't know how many the competition will have, but I expect it to be a lot less. Also, their software will be first generation software whereas 3DO's is mature, high quality material. So, we should do fine."

"Then there's the M2 upgrade which will be a whole generation ahead of the stuff on the shelves this fall. A huge leap in performance and it even comes with MPEG built-in as a freebie. Ultimately, I think MPEG will make a big difference. How many customers, when the time comes to actually ante up, are willing to pay hundred of pounds for a system that will never be able to play MPEG movies?"

What's coming up in terms of software?

"It gets better and better. EA has a big line-up with another dozen products, many of them sport games – I just got my first look at *NHL Hockey* last week and it will be huge! Virgin has *Creature Shock*, *11th Hour*, *Heart Of Darkness*, *Dragon* and *Lost Eden*. Interplay has a big line-up with only *Kingdoms* announced but several others of great interest. Panasonic has a major line-up of over ten titles. I was playing early versions of *Krisalis' Starfighter 3000* and Domark's *Flying Nightmares* at ECTS, seriously enjoying both of them. And Studio 3DO will be bringing out around ten games this year, including *Zhadnost*, *BattleSport*, *Captain Quasar*, *BladeForce*, *Killing Time* and maybe *PO'd*.

"Of course, to keep up with all the latest games people should subscribe to that rag – the 3DO Magazine!" □

Profile

John Edelson has had an amazing career. After being an undergraduate at Yale University, he joined the Peace Corps and spent two years doing technical support in W. Africa. He then earned a prestigious MBA business degree from Harvard, before moving to Paris where he worked as a 'high-falutin' business consultant over corporate mergers and so forth. After two years he realised he didn't like French people – despite marrying one! – and decided to become a part of the hi-tech Silicon Valley thing. His first interview at Silicon Graphics was for a techie job he knew nothing about, but he so impressed the interviewer SGI offered him a job as a business consultant. A year later he'd picked up enough technical knowledge to join as Product Manager in Networking and Superconnectivity – a fantastically techie job. He then moved onto corporate marketing for six months, before being charged with recruiting software for SGI's Indigo computer. His proudest achievement there was getting the highly respected Autocad program converted over. This success led to him becoming the marketing manager for multimedia, animation and games applications for SGI hardware. He left to join 3DO in August '92, becoming the company's 33rd employee. His first job was in the Developer Support division which he soon came to lead, before deciding to return to marketing as the manager for 3DO Europe.

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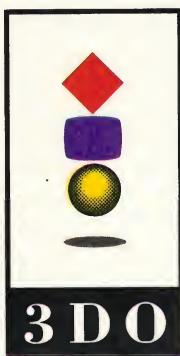
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M2

The Reality Machine

To understand just how big a leap M2 represents you have to understand the concept as much as the technology. The name Accelerator suggests it's akin to a turbocharger bolted onto your old car - same engine, but a fair bit more horsepower. It's a neat marketing concept and makes it clear that if you have 3DO I, you won't have to buy a whole new machine to get 3DO II performance. That's reassuring, but can you really make the leap to full blooded, next, next generation performance with just a few extra chips?

No. To put it simply, M2 does not enhance 3DO I, it eats it alive. M2 is an entirely new machine, built around a screamingly fast 528Mb/sec databus with 64bit custom chips. There are no compromises for 3DO I compatibility, M2 will use only the host machine's CD-ROM drive and power supply - accessing the custom chips or RAM would slow M2 down too much to be of significant use. Restrictions on the old machine, such as screen resolution, simply no longer apply. This uncompromised design makes 3DO M2 easily the world's most powerful videogames system, but that's only half the story.

M2 also incorporates 3DO I on a single chip. While this has some advantages for operating system compati-

bility, it also means a 3DO II unit could be built without a costly duplication of both machine's hardware. Following on a few months after the add-on's release, 3DO II will allow for a fearsome marketing blitzkrieg aimed at people who haven't got any 3DO yet.

The reason why 3DO's technology is so flexible comes down to two reasons. Firstly, they own the rights to all the chips in 3DO I - including the ARM60 CPU - and as technology advances they're free to incorporate the chips into a single ASIC. Secondly, the 3DO system is designed around an operating system. This impenetrable layer of software sits between hardware and games, allowing the various chips to be radically changed without incompatibility problems. It's the same way IBM PCs work and has other significant advantages for M2.

While in hardware terms M2's a whole new machine, in software terms it really is just an Accelerator. The old Operating System will be much the same, albeit slimmed

Two years after launching the next generation war with 3DO I, the 3DO Company has unveiled its plans for the next leap forward. The Mark 2 Accelerator will be both an add-on and the core of a new, 3DO II console. The technology is incredibly advanced and will make it undoubtedly the world's most powerful videogames system. Stuart Wynne explains why the future belongs to 3DO.

down to save memory, while most of the existing programming tools still work. The 2D programming libraries, for example, are virtually unchanged although the processing horsepower they can access will be massively increased. As it generally takes about two years to master a new system, the 3DO approach is a real boon - and also ensures its core is incredibly robust and reliable having been solid use for two years. Where there are significant changes is 3D, with a whole new API brought in with three different levels to suit programmers of varying experience with 3D graphics.

HARD-TECH

Although some cynics argue 3DO II is some kind of hurried move to counter the PlayStation, work actually began on M2 before the first FZ-1 hit the shelves. Dave Needle, who designed much of 3DO I's hardware, was the original driving force behind the system. His project received a huge boost when John Sales moved over from Motorola, where he'd played a key role in designing the original 601 PowerPC chip [see box-out]. Sales gave 3DO a direct line into the PowerPC consortium, which soon agreed to support the production of a CPU precisely tailored for M2. This immediately raised the stakes for the whole design, which has now evolved into a truly fantastic compendium of built-in special effects, memory compression and ultra-fast data processing.

Including the 3DO I chip, there are no less than ten co-processors working alongside the PowerPC CPU. As >

M2 TECH SPEC

CPU: Custom version of PowerPC 602 running at 66MHz.

Co-processors: 10 for graphics/audio.

Polygon handling: 1,000,000 polygons/sec

700,000+ polygons/sec with all effects (see below).

Pixel throughput: 100,000,000/sec

Custom Graphics: Destination-based texture-mapping

Texture compression

Pixel-level Gouraud shading

Alpha channel pixel averaging

and anti-aliasing.

MIP mapping

Z-Buffering

Screen Resolution: 680x480 (16bit or 24bit colour)
320x240 (16bit or 24bit colour)

Databus bandwidth: 528Mb/sec

Sound: DSP running at 66MHz

32 Channels with MPEG audio decompression/
interpolation on all channels.

Memory: 4MB SDRAM

2MB ROM

Save Game: PCMCIA Slot

32K NVRAM on 3DO I

Expansion: PCMCIA 3DO Card slots for peripherals such as modems.

VideoCD Capability: Yes. MPEG1 is built into the system. Version 2.0 control software means it should play both NTSC and PAL discs.

> you might expect, exceptionally fast polygon processing is a key specification and 700,000 polygons/sec comfortably exceeds the 360,000 claimed for the PlayStation. While this is impressive enough, M2's principal advantage lies in how it handles them. There's a massive array of filters, super-accurate texture-mapping and other features to paint the polygons so they look more realistic.

The PlayStation could achieve similar effects by clever software routines, but these take time to develop, burn up processor time and – most important of all – consume lots of extremely valuable RAM. Z-buffering, for example, was supposed to be built into the PlayStation. The fact that it isn't forces developers to use software routines which significantly reduce that 360,000 polygons/sec statistic. Look at the box for *Toh shin Den* and you'll see that highly acclaimed beat-'em-up is exceptionally proud of the fact it can process 90,000 polygons.

As Bullfrog's Peter Molyneux remarks, "memory is becoming increasingly important" for the real performance of the superconsoles. While PCs now usually come with 8Mb as standard, soon to grow to 16Mb, consoles must make do with far less to keep costs down. By building in so many special features, M2's real-world performance should be much closer to its specs. It will also come with a relatively generous 4.5Mb of a special, high-speed form of memory called SDRAM. This is far more flexible for data handling, as indicated by the 528Mb/sec bus bandwidth – as compared with 132Mb/sec for the PlayStation.

Rapid data handling is particularly critical for M2 due to its exceptionally powerful memory compression techniques. Rather than being offered as an add-on, MPEG decompression is built into M2. Its importance goes far beyond simply allowing you to play the latest VideoCD movies and supersharp intro graphics. The 528Mb/sec bandwidth will allow for some very exciting combinations of realtime polygon graphics handling with pixel-sharp FMV. A movie conversion could effortlessly stream movie footage into fully interactive gameplay. More importantly, MPEG is an extremely powerful data compression technique and it can be used on standard game graphics and audio to save memory. M2 will also have its own, custom compression routines built-in as well.

As 3DO points out, even esoteric functions like MIP mapping will help save memory – as MIP mapping prevents rapidly scaling objects from bitmapping, programmers can use it to cut down their work on designing different graphics for varying distances. It all adds up to a very smart system both in itself, and its potential for the future.

M2's modular approach indicates a clear and dramatic upgrade path for M3, especially given the way the PowerPC chip is likely to develop. M2 also opens up the 3DO system for peripherals. Rather than using custom expansion ports, M2 uses the PCMCIA standard for its Card Slots. PCMCIA is used not only for removable memory cards, but a host of PC peripherals such as modems – which would be a doddle to adapt for M2.

EXPERT ADVICE

Hot technology undoubtedly excites tech-heads, but as 3DO's Bob Faber remarked – M2's principal advantage will be that its games simply look so much better. To translate tech specs into real world performance we spoke to DMA's Managing Director, David Jones. > p20



This close-up on the same dinosaur as illustrated right, shows just how detailed it really is. Even at this close range, the eye and the dinosaur's skin remain sharp and smooth – without pixelation. The dinosaur is rendered out of polygons, then texture mapped with special filtering applied.

DEMO DELIGHTS

While rumours have been floating around about the M2 demo for six months or more, it's been under very tight wraps. Until M2's official unveiling at E3, the demo was only supposed to be seen by developers bound by strict Non-Disclosure Agreements. At the ECTS a small, private room was set aside for viewings with American Neal Robison providing a techie briefing before the somewhat fuzzy VHS tape was run. The briefing was important because the demo isn't designed to make people think, 'wow, what great games!', rather it illustrates specific hardware capabilities far beyond competing systems.

The first, splitscreen demo underlines this with its prosaic setting: a green field with a cow behind a chainlink fence. When the camera zooms forward on the top image, the fresian patterning quickly breaks up into ugly blocks just like in every other videogame you've ever seen. But on the bottom, MIP mapping recalculates the image so it remains perfectly sharp. Then fog is brought in to demonstrate just how smoothly graduated such effects are handled. The camera zooms in again to show the two effects interrelate perfectly.

The next demo shows a woman in a house going through combat moves. Graphically, she lacks the brash effect of *Toh Shin Den*'s combat queens but as you pay attention, you notice how much more realistic the image

is. While *Toh Shin Den*'s figures boast an impressive array of polygons, the garish texture maps only partially obscure just how blocky they are. M2's rather gray, Gouraud shaded figurine is so smoothly defined it's difficult to spot the polygons – making for a far more realistic effect. And when she moves there's none of the polygon glitching which Saturn's *Virtua Fighting* suffers, and even *Toh Shin Den* in places. The animation is so smooth you find yourself criticising not it, but rather the somewhat timid woman whose movements were digitised using motion capture technology.

Now a dinosaur is brought into the scene. Although it lacks the immediate impact of the PlayStation's famous demo, the texture-mapping of the skin is far more subtle. The dino boasts a lot of polygons and it's not on a black background, it's sharing processor time with a woman and a 3D background. To ram the point home the scene restarts from a distant view of the house. The camera smoothly pans around the house and then zooms in through a window, before circling around the figures as they go through combat moves. As Robison points out, there are no pauses or cuts for new data to be loaded – it's all one continuous movement.

After another demo of fog effects, we're taken to a new scene – a little inlet with a yacht circling around an island surrounded by sheer cliff faces. A dolphin periodically leaps out of the sea as it accompanies the yacht.



Here we see the dinosaur with Sheena. Note the realistically curved contours of both fighters - M2 allows for so many polygons, figures can appear totally realistic. The fog is used to illustrate the power of M2's custom filters - rather than a flat, grey overlay, the fog's opacity to be calculated exponentially. That is, the further away an object is, the more obscured it becomes. While this might seem a minor graphical flourish, technically it's an exceptionally impressive demonstration of M2's sophistication. No other console could recreate this effect.



Below, Bossie the cow in fog. On the right you can see M2's 64bit MIP mapping in action, automatically recalculating an image so that it remains sharp and coherent however close you get. Below right, you see Bossie's image - and that of the chainlink fence - pixelate into unrealistic blocks on a conventional, 32bit system. MIP mapping is a major breakthrough for videogames, not only preventing bitmapping but also saving memory as artists normally have to draw several different graphics for varying distances.



For the non-technical, the scene is first shown as raw polygons and there are thousands and thousands of the blighters, the sea polygons oscillating just like waves. Then the scene fills in with texture maps, Gouraud shading and light sourcing. The camera zooms forward, enlarging tiny palm leaves so they fill the screen, yet still remain sharp and believable. Then daylight is turned off and the circling, bobbing yacht turns on its pilot light. Instantly the craggy cliff faces, texture mapped and packed with thousands of polygons, glow with smoothly graduated light.

"Yes!" says John Edelson with evident delight and it's all over. As you wander away it's not so much the

images which stun you, as the hardware. What makes your head ache is the technology's potential. The demo showreel isn't about mere intro graphics, and rather artless ones at that, it's about realtime, fully interactive game environments unlike anything that's ever been seen before.



JARGON-BUSTING

24bit colour: Basically you can have 24 colours for each bit of your screen display, selectable from a palette of over 16 million colours – which is more than the human eye can distinguish between.

Alpha Channel pixel averaging/anti-aliasing: On a conventional console the diagonal edges of graphics are often jagged due to way pixels are arranged. On M2, the alpha channel is used so that individual pixels on a sharp edge have a transparency value. The dividing line is thus precisely defined to the pixel level, with overlapping transparencies averaging out pixel breaks for an even more realistic edge. Combined with a hi-res screen resolution, this means M2 can easily replicate the razor-sharp displays of coin-ops such as *Ridge Racer*. It also allows for exceptionally realistic effects such as fog, mist etc.

Destination-based texture mapping: This uses the Z-buffer for more accurate texturing to prevent the warping which tends to happen when you to close to a wall in *Monster Manor*, or *Ridge Racer* for that matter.

Gouraud shading: In the real world, few objects are simple polygons – most shapes are partly rounded. Gouraud shading refines conventional light-sourcing to provide a softer, more realistic effect on curved surfaces.

Light sourcing: A system whereby 3D objects' colours vary in shade according to their relation to the position of one or more 'light sources'.

MPEG1: Motion Pictures Expert Group standard 1. An audio/visual compression standard used by VideoCD discs. Not only is this built into M2, but it's integrated in a way which allows developers to treat MPEG footage just like any other data. You could, for example, apply MPEG footage to an object just like any other texture map.

MIP Mapping: With conventional computer graphics, the closer you get, the more blocky the image becomes. MIP Mapping acts to keep images sharp by automatically recalculating an image's design as it gets closer. It also ensures the scaling of objects as they move closer is as exceptionally smooth and without ugly transitions.

PCMCIA: Personal Computer Memory Card International Association. Despite the name, the standard promoted by PCMCIA is now used for a wide range of PC peripherals such as modems.

Pixel throughput: This often overlooked capability is critical for machine's screen display. M2's 100 million pixels per second throughput means the screen can be redrawn 20 times a frame. A figure impossible without M2's special SDRAM.

SDRAM: Synchronous Dynamic Random Access Memory. This is a new technology designed to offer increased speed, especially for graphics, over conventional DRAM. It works by synchronising its various parts to a clock, radically reducing the memory checking pauses of conventional DRAM. As a consequence there's no distinction in M2 between video memory (fast) and normal memory (slow) – it's all fast!

Z-buffering: This is where 3D objects' z-axis (depth) positions are automatically plotted so that when one object moves in front of the other, the rear graphic is properly obscured or 'clipped'. It also means M2 automatically concentrates on calculating what appears on screen, rather than unseen objects, further saving time.

P18 > Besides the huge success of *Lemmings*, DMA has long been renowned for their cutting edge programming and are one of Nintendo's exclusive dream team of Ultra64 developers. From this perspective, Jones has no doubt M2's specs offer a "four to five-fold increase" over the performance of the Saturn or PlayStation – and even superior to the *Ridge Racer* arcade machine. "One of the things that lets down the PlayStation and Saturn is the screen display. M2 will allow for a high resolution display just like the arcade. The fact that it's got bi-linear

interpolation and MIP mapping also means there'll be no jagged edges."

While somewhat skeptical about 3DO meeting the \$200 (£150) pricepoint, Jones believes the specs hang together convincingly. Another high profile admirer is Archer Maclean, who famously enthused over the PlayStation in an interview two years ago. Maclean still admires that machine, but isn't developing for it because of his disgruntlement over the royalty rate. M2 is attractive because not only is it "ridiculously powerful" but the



In the battle of the titans, M2 gives 3DO a massive 5-7 leap in graphics processing. At first glance this might not seem immediately apparent here, with the fog obscured Sheena appearing far plainer than Toh Shin Den's Run Go. However, the closer you look at Sheena, the more impressive this crude engineering demo becomes. While Run Go is plainly made up of a limited number of roughly assembled polygons, spotting where polygons begin and end on Sheena is virtually impossible. Moreover, when Sheena moves, knee and arm joints move entirely realistically without breaking up. While PlayStation has made polygons popular, it's M2 that offers the real revolution with graphics which are more about reality than geometry.

PowerPC

The original PowerPC technology was developed by a powerhouse consortium of Apple, IBM and Motorola. By using advanced RISC architecture, they hope to smash Intel's domination of the PC market with its increasingly costly, CISC-based 80xx86 series – currently spearheaded by Pentium. Already, Apple have successfully moved over to the new technology and the design has won respect for offering superb performance at substantially less cost than Intel designs. Sega, for example, have recently announced they'll use PowerPC chips for their new arcade machines.

For 3DO, PowerPC technology not only offers a very powerful new CPU, but also links the company with arguably the world's most powerful chip consortium. Over the coming years, the consortium will produce

ever more advanced chips while retaining compatibility – ideal for M3. A further advantage is that a lot of developers are already familiar with the PowerPC's basic architecture.

The 602 is a brand-new PowerPC chip, specifically designed for high performance consumer electronics. For M2, 3DO have further customised the chip to make it even more powerful. Their chip has a data/instruction cache of 64Kbits and is capable of an exceptional 132 MFLOPS (Million Floating Point Operations per Second). By way of comparison, Sony claim the PlayStation's custom ASIC – including the CPU – has one million transistors and runs at 33MHz. The PowerPC 602 has 2.5 million transistors and runs twice as fast. That equals about five times the processing power – without mentioning M2's ten co-precessors.



INDUSTRY REACTION

"It's the greatest bit of kit I've ever seen."
John Kavanagh, Domark US, Vice-President.

"One of the biggest frustrations of a game creator is watching a great concept crushed by inadequate system performance. With the M2, that will no longer happen; we are entering an era where the primary limitation is our imagination."

Mark Cerny, VP of Technology, Universal Interactive Studios.

"I saw the PSX. I saw the Saturn. I saw the Ultra64, and then I saw the M2 and literally my jaw fell open."

Baron R.K. Wolfshield, MD, Silent Software.

"The M2 and its revolutionary design and ground-breaking features provide us with an excellent vehicle to deliver our software to consumers and meet our goals to stay on the leading edge of this fast-paced industry."

Dick Lehrberg, V-P, Interplay Productions.

"The one thing we're really excited about is that it's able to process over a million shaded polygons per second which means you can virtually render anything in real time... you just have to look at the polygon performance per second to see which machine offers the most chance of dazzling gameplay."

Randy Scott, CEO, Art Data Interactive.

"If it lives up to that spec, it looks very interesting. MIP mapping is a very impressive technology, especially if

it's built-in, while built-in z-buffering could save a lot of time... With modular programming, porting games is relatively easy but we'd have to be convinced the spec is real, and the market is viable, first."

Ian Turnbull, Tribe Software Development Manager, Ocean.

"The type of features discussed here today, Gouraud shading, filtered textures, 30 frame per second animations, and Onyx level performance will take gamers into a new level of immersion. We plan to take advantage of the M2 technology in developing for the new platform."

Steven Weinstein, V-P, Spectrum Holobyte.

"Very impressive, significantly out in front from the rest of the pack. If I rated the other two superconsoles as a four and a five, M2 would be a ten. We're definitely developing for it."

Peter Molyneux, Managing Director, Bullfrog.

"It looks pretty much like 3DO M2 will be a third generation machine... If it proves to be as fast as 3DO are saying then, technologically at least, there's going to be little that can touch it."

Bruce McMillan, Project Manager, EA Canada.

"The M2 system takes full advantage of the PowerPC architecture and its price/performance benefits. We look forward to working with 3DO to assure the success of the M2 platform." **Kevin Meyer, VP, Motorola.**

"A superlative piece of hardware. If they get enough market penetration, there's no doubt we'd love to

develop for it."

Fergus McGovern, Managing Director, Probe Software.

"We're very excited about M2 and will definitely manufacture the system. We believe M2 takes away any cloud of uncertainty about which system to buy today."

Andrew Chorzeliski, Marketing Manager, GoldStar.

"Absolutely mind-boggling. I've seen some very impressive demos on all the new machines, but M2 was much more impressive."

Tony Kanvagh, Managing Director, Krisalis Software.

"It sounds good. If it lives up to its claims – and I mean in price and availability as well as spec – it will be excellent."

David Braben, Frontier Developments.

"If it lives up to that spec, M2 will be ridiculously powerful."

Archer MacLean, programmer of Dropzone, Jimmy White's Snooker & Pool.

"Specs are very, very good – well in excess of the arcade machines for Ridge Racer and Daytona. If they can do that for \$200 it'll be quite amazing." **David Jones, Managing Director, DMA Design.**

"We're 100% committed to a 64bit system. There's absolutely no question about it."

Richard Marmoy, 3DO Marketing Manager, Panasonic.

business model is so much fairer.

David Jones believes there's no doubt M2's specs will at the least put it in the same league as Ultra64 – 'way past cool' in regard to Sega or Sony. 3DO themselves claim M2 is two to three times better than even Ultra64, "which has just a 40k cache for texture maps" without even mentioning the far higher storage capacity of CDs over Ultra64's carts.

NEXT LEVEL GAMING

Hardware is nothing without software and 3DO have learnt their lesson well from the first machine's launch. They're currently negotiating to have four of 1995's hottest arcade games ported across to the M2 for launch. Two of the world's most famous coin-op manufacturers, including one renowned for their superb 3D games, are about to sign up. There will also be 8-10 entirely new M2 games, all major, high value titles. Besides games from the increasingly impressive Studio 3DO, we know Electronic Arts are already working on M2 Road Rash, Silent Software have a Return Fire sequel planned while Art Data Interactive have an entirely new game called Alien Seed specifically designed for M2. Bullfrog will "definitely" develop for M2, probably a conversion first to learn the system followed by dedicated games thereafter. The exact roster of titles is still cloaked in secrecy, but as DMA's David Jones points out, "with such powerful specs almost any developer is going to be interested."

This is likely to include developers who have so far

shunned 3DO. While skeptical about the price, Ocean's Ian Turnbull admitted the specs look extremely good. If it lives up to the hype, conversions will be relatively easy. Big developers increasingly use a modular, C-based approach and at Ocean most graphics are rendered in hi-res, then degraded to suit the capabilities of the machine.

At the same time, it shouldn't be forgotten that 3DO is designed to always keep compatibility with its backlog. As important as new games are the growing numbers, maturity and playability of 3DO I games provide an increasingly healthy foundation. There are over 200 3DO I games worldwide, and titles such as Space Hulk, BattleSport, PO'ed, BladeForce etc suggest the best is very much to come.

1996 & BEYOND

Currently 3DO hope to have M2 on sale in the Fall of 1995 for America, with the European version due around Spring of 1996. A reported price tag of \$200 (£150) is likely to be an underestimate however, 3DO themselves won't comment on it, and we can expect delivery dates to slip a bit as well.

In reality, these things don't matter as much as people will pretend. A few extra months and a more likely price of £200-250 aren't as important as the simple fact of M2's official announcement. Some UK developers have been sceptical about the specs, remembering all the hype about 3DO I. However John Edelson, Marketing Manager for 3DO Europe, is keen to differentiate

between media hype and published commitments. 3DO has never failed to meet the latter and M2's specs are now very much on record – the company is "100%" committed to them.

This is the reassurance 3DO owners and developers want. It locks 3DO not only into its upgrade path, but underlines that with technology which is considerably superior to any foreseeable competition. Sega and Sony have played their cards, PlayStation II isn't due until 1998 at the earliest while Sega's ability to develop, and manufacture, a 64bit Saturn II is so doubtful many believe it might eventually become a 3DO licensee itself.

Above all, M2 marks a genuine transition point for interactive entertainment. If the PlayStation ranks as the last great videogames system, M2 marks the first tentative step toward a sci-fi reality machine. Rather than simply being content with throwing around ridiculous amounts of brightly coloured polygons, M2 ups the spec so high it can fill out the cliché, blocky arcade characters so that they resemble people rather than robots. A huge panoply of special effects have been designed, and built-into the hardware, so that these shapes can be cloaked in light, filters and textures which begin to simulate real-life visuals rather the polygonised, 16bit bitmaps of the competition. In short, M2 is a step toward the entirely immersive, virtual world dreams of countless sci-fi writers and videogame fans from the day this whole business started. □ ssw

3DO Magazine

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Surround Sound



Dolby Stereo was invented by the now legendary Dolby labs – of tape noise reduction fame. It followed on from 1970's experiments in quadraphonic sound and noise reduction for film use, where it was discovered a matrix system could produce four channels of hi-fi sound from a specially encoded stereo recording.

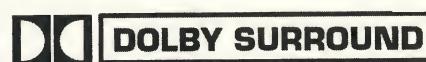
The film industry gave the system a lukewarm reception at first, but then came Star Wars which redefined the sound quality of feature films. Everyone was awed at the spectacle of that tiny freighter being pursued by the huge Imperial Star Destroyer. With rumbling sub-bass and whining lasers, the soundtrack helped to create a vast amount of the stunning impact. The whole film used carefully mixed and placed sounds to envelop the watcher and draw them into the action. Lasers ripped around you whilst TIE Fighters and X-Wings manoeuvred themselves in every direction, exploding over your shoulder or in the front row.

Everyone was captivated. From that moment onwards almost every film has had a Dolby Stereo soundtrack, and the film industry has never looked back.

For home use Dolby Stereo is known as Dolby Surround, unless you live in America where it is still under the name of Dolby Stereo. Need For Speed showed this; some of the packaging and software said Dolby Surround, yet the disc had Dolby Stereo emblazoned across it! This same mix of descriptions also affects VHS videotapes which frequently have the two mixed up, or sadly do not mention either at all.

On 3DO, Electronic Arts have pioneered the use of Dolby

How many times have you looked at the Dolby Surround logo appearing on games and wondered just what it meant? Or maybe you knew, but were unsure if the reality lived up to the hype. Audiophile Brian Keet explains how to get the most out of your 3DO's audio output and provides a potted history of Dolby's wondrous creation to give some background to the processes involved.



Surround in games. Road Rash, FIFA International, The Need For Speed, Shockwave, etc. all use surround sound effectively: Road Rash has cars travelling from behind your shoulder, with police sirens and other bikes coming in and out of the soundfield.

Strangely, despite being very clear, Road Rash seems to have a

very flat feel to the sound, unlike The Need For Speed. This has excellent soundfield manipulation, with your opponent's car moving around your position effectively. Even swapping views from inside to out-

side changes the positioning of sounds. Wheelspins screech out from rear speakers, whilst police sirens close in from behind and oncoming traffic blares horns at your antics. Very effective!

However, Shockwave currently has the best soundfield by far. Banking hard around an exploding tripod in the midst of an overkill dogfight, with alien ships and distant explosions all around, the sound holds together remarkably, rotating around the room and following your flight accurately. It can actually be disorientating! Sub bass rattles windows and upsets the neighbours, whilst atmospheric audio envelops the room on selection screens. Only the break up from fellow pilots' radio chatter >

feature

3DO
Magazine



> spoils the sound occasionally.

Other software houses are now following suit: Silent Software's *Return Fire* is incredible on a good surround system, the spectacular opening sequence setting the standard for the rest of the game. You can't help but be impressed: this shows just how good 16bit audio can get! Likely to be even more awesome is the much delayed *Wing Commander 3*, which should bring that Star Wars experience into the interactive age.

In the future it seems inevitable even more games will adopt the system, but there's plenty of surround sound material around right now. Because surround sound is encoded into the normal stereo soundtrack, it usually stays with a film when it's put onto videotape, burned into a VideoCD or broadcast over the airways. The latter has provided a big boost for home cinema due to the NICAM revolution. This allows for TV programmes to carry near CD-quality stereo sound and, as a consequence, makes extracting the surround information far more reliable. Some TV companies are even providing Dolby soundtracks for their own big budget shows such as *Cracker*, *ER*, *NYPD Blue* and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

To experience the full surround sound effect in your own home is surprisingly easy. All you need is a decoder to sort out the separate audio tracks and speakers placed carefully around the room, plus a NICAM VCR for TV programmes or movies.

SURROUNDED!

Firstly, if you don't have your 3DO connected to your hi-fi, why not? Go out and buy phono leads to connect to the auxiliary sockets of the amplifier. You will be amazed at the increased sound quality. Even better, place the stereo speakers 4-6ft either side of your television, so that the sound is evenly spread

Toshiba have led the way for home cinema and their 39 series TVs are among the best around.

Sony's award winning Pro Logic kit is amazing value. It includes the STR-D515 amplifier and all the speakers you need for just £350.

across the screen. Turn the volume on the TV off and just use the stereo speakers. This gives a far superior sound than NICAM stereo televisions, whose speakers are really much too close together.

For simple surround sound, get hold of a cheap pair of speakers and connect these according to the diagram in figure 1. Place the two speakers behind your sitting position, further to the left and right, not pointing directly at you. Hey presto! A cheap surround sound setup. Please realise that this system really does work, but cannot compete with a full blown Dolby Pro Logic System. Also be careful not to overload your hi-fi amplifier as it will not be capable of being turned up as loud as normal due to the extra speaker loading.

To go any further from this basic system you need to spend some cash. Below you will find listed a number of options, but remember this is only to give you an idea of what is available.



DECODER DILEMMAS

There are two types of decoder available, Dolby Surround and Dolby Pro-Logic. The first gives two channels at the front and a mono channel at the rear, split over two speakers. Dialogue spoken from films and games comes out of both speakers, as do central sounds. Can sound detach from the picture on screen.

Dolby Pro-Logic decoders are a more advanced version of Surround decoder, offering an extra centre channel to keep dialogue tied to the screen, whilst using some clever circuitry to steer the sounds more effectively between the speakers.

If you can afford it Pro-Logic is a better bet, giving a superior soundfield than the older Surround models.



The £280 Technics SA-GX370LK is just about the best all-rounder for the price, great for both Pro Logic and mainstream pop music - speakers are extra though.

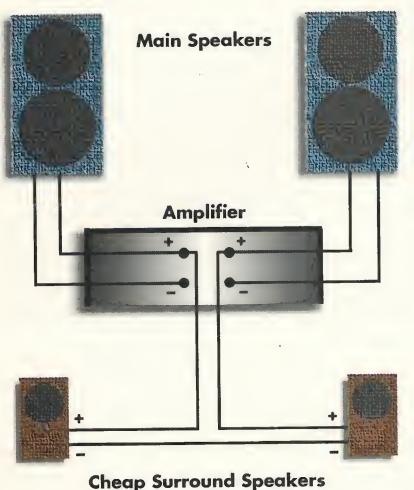


Figure 1: Speaker surprise. It works!

TELEVISION WITH PRO-LOGIC SURROUND SYSTEM

This involves the minimum of fuss if you need a new television. The advantage is that everything comes in one package, complete with speakers and cable. The disadvantage is that TV amplifiers are usually low powered and offer only very limited bass. Listen very carefully when checking one out. I've heard a VHS demo tape for one TV manufacturer that sounded excellent on the TV demo, but when the tape was played on a separate system sounded strange, having been remixed to suit the TV! Expect to pay £800 plus for this set-up. Not easily

upgradable. Look around for some cheap bargains.

PRO-LOGIC PROCESSOR

These add on to an existing hi-fi set-up, and use the existing amplifier to give the stereo pair, whilst supplying centre and rear outputs. Can be underpowered sometimes, but can be upgraded. £250 upwards. Remember you also need extra speakers!

PRO-LOGIC AMPLIFIER

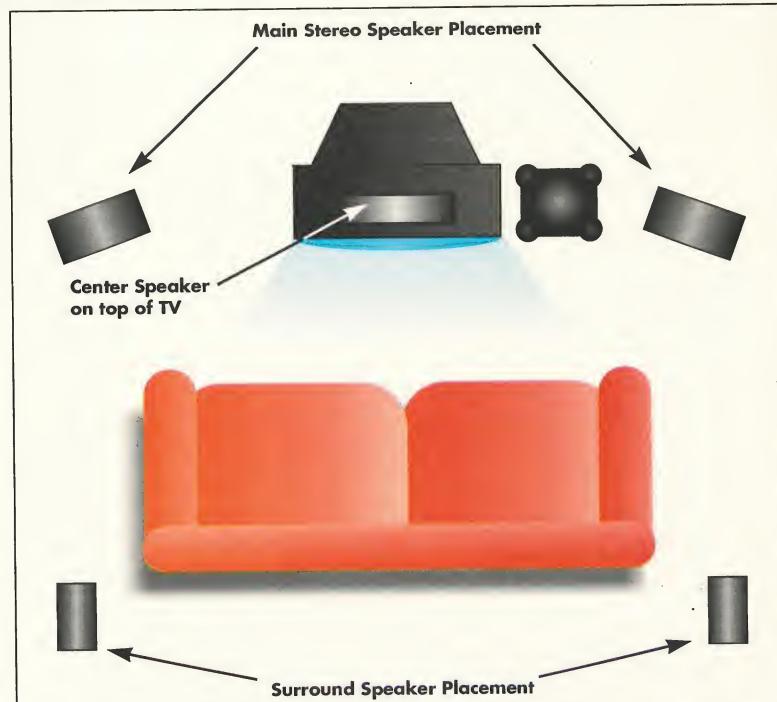
A direct replacement for the hi-fi amplifier. Usually a large black beast with a fluorescent display. 200w output

figures are normal, as are a wide range of prices. Expect to pay from £300 to £2000, but audition very carefully at a knowledgeable Audio-Visual dealer. Five or six speakers are needed on top of this. (You can use your existing pair of hi-fi speakers to start with, but it is recommended to use matched speakers all around.).

THX

Or total overkill. THX specified equipment follows exactly Mr George Lucas' specification for cinemas. (There are actually very few cinemas that have this level of equipment in the UK). This will cost you approximately £5000 upwards for a 'cheap' system to alarmingly high prices usually reserved to Ferrari showrooms. £30,000 is an average. Expect high running costs as well as the amplifiers consume vast amounts of energy, whilst the speakers consume vast amounts of room space. Plus points: Good sound (!) and someone will set it up for you.

As well as the possibilities outlined above there are also numerous specific systems around, ranging from



The Ideal World: Unfortunately, this positioning of speakers can rarely be achieved without major rearrangement of your furniture, plug sockets, doors, walls etc...

surround Midi hi-fi systems that offer it all in a box to satellite systems that offer the same facilities.

The best advice if you are truly interested is to read a few magazines devoted to the subject, and find a solution tailored to your needs. Not everyone wants black boxes and speaker cables trailed over their lounge. Home Entertainment Magazine is recommended for a candid yet accurate review of the hardware available.

For the future there are, of course, new standards on the way. The Dolby Digital format seems to be the main contender, but this is so far confined to cinemas and NTSC laserdisc players. Conventional VCRs simply can't cope with it, while even PAL laserdisc systems are incompatible since the larger size of a PAL image eats up too much space. The new Digital Video Disc format proposed by Toshiba (see news) will support Dolby Digital, but that's unlikely to become a mass market product for a good many years yet. □ bk

AUTHOR'S SYSTEM

Panasonic PAL 3DO
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Full Monstor Video

Creature Shock from Virgin

Argonaut's Creature Shock has proved to be both one of the prettiest and also one of the most playable FMV blasters to appear on PC CD-ROM. Stuart Wynne spoke to Project Manager Darren Drabwell about the enhanced 3DO version.

Argonaut have long been at the cutting edge of hi-tech gaming. Their breakthrough game *Starglider* kicked off the 3D revolution on 16bit computers, while *StarWing* and the SuperFX chip did much the same for the SNES. More recently they've thrown their resources behind a cross-platform 3D development system called BRender.

Creature Shock is yet another demonstration of their hi-tech prowess with its innovative approach to that dread genre: the FMV blast-'em-up. The game was begun well over a year ago and soon spawned rumours that Argonaut had finally cracked the format. Fevered speculation gathered about a truly interactive experience set within a breathtaking Aliens-style environment. The first trade show appearances drew appropriate 'oohs' and 'ahhs' for the killer graphics.

Unlike the games which made the company famous, the 3D was pre-rendered FMV rather than realtime, but the fabulous detail and imagination offered substantial

compensation. Released just before last Xmas on PC CD-ROM, those slick graphics made it a big chart success and, unlike *Lawnmower Man*, people actually seemed quite pleased with the gameplay when they got it home.

Undoubtedly one of the most appealing parts of the game is its playfulness over both structure and plot. The scenario is the usual xenocidal blast-everything-in-sight riff, but your central character is an athletic, crewcut female and the action alternates between first-person perspective tunnel action, cut sequences, end-level guardians and interlevel blast-'em-up flying sections.

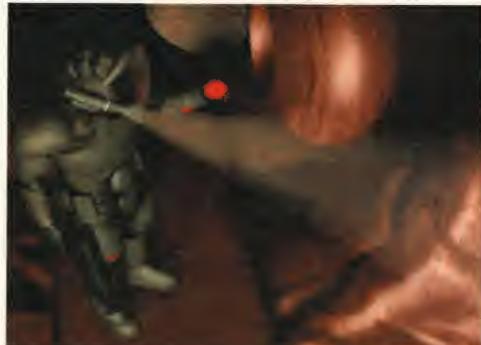
On the PC it all gelled together very well. As an FMV game appearances were, of course, deceptive with movement control limited to choices at corridor junctions. However a mapping element added strategy, while the crucial blasting bits were suitably frantic as shock, horror monsters lurched out of the gloom with dismaying frequency. While Psygnosis' pioneering, but ultimately dull FMV shooters *Microcosm* and *Novastorm* have remained confined to Japan on 3DO – there was never any doubt 3DO *Creature Shock* would be a big release

for Virgin.

Conversion work actually began before the PC version was even finished, programmer James Wolf multi-tasking between the 3DO version and original work on the game's flying sequences. The delay has been useful, allowing James to tweak elements criticised in the PC version to make the game even more playable. The 3DO also has superior FMV over the PC version, as you'd expect, with Argonaut's own custom video compression routines tweaked appropriately. According to Wolf, video compression is pretty much the same across all the



Does the shapely creature, above, survive? Only the end of *Creature Shock* has the answer.



current superconsoles. CDi will have superior graphics, using the MPEG add-on, but it plays slower and the way its MPEG works means there can be no music.

As a consequence, Project manager Darren Drabwell is especially intrigued by M2's tech spec. The combination of built-in MPEG and a whopping 528Mb/sec bandwidth mean mixing in a soundtrack would be a doddle. In fact, the specs would allow for *Galaxian 3*-style special effects with razor-sharp FMV, a pro-logic Dolby soundtrack and realtime, texture-mapped, light-sourced

polygons being effortlessly rendered on top. It's a dazzling prospect, but in the meantime Drabwell is confident *Creature Shock* will have the same impact on 3DO I as PC – especially as he believes it's the most playable version yet. □ ssw

• *Creature Shock* will be released in July/August.



3DO Magazine



Big Guns

Space Hulk: Vengeance Of The Blood Angels from E.A.

Electronic Arts' latest has just gone Alpha, but already those who've seen it know it's going to be the big game this summer. Dave Westley tells you why...



When *Space Hulk* is released later this year there will be little that will be able to stand in its way. It has atmosphere, it has tension, it has bloody great big guns – but more than that Electronic Arts' *Space Hulk* has class that's rarely seen in any product, on any format. With your first smooth movements down its dimly lit, blood splattered tunnels you'll know that this is a game that will be difficult to break free from, and that when you do return to terra firma for sleep, there shall be nightmares...

Space Hulk belongs to the Warhammer Universe, an alternate world created by the remarkably successful Games Workshop, a company specialising in fantasy miniatures – toy soldiers to you and I. The company's headquarters lie in the shadow of a decaying Nottingham Castle, Robin Hood's last resting place providing an appropriate inspiration for the creators of

modern mythology. Enter the small white cottage that marks its entrance and you'll find the proverbial Tardis, doors lead on and on as more and more buildings turn out to have been infiltrated by the young men who make the rules for dreams. There's a quiet opulence in the place, an orderliness that can only be achieved by a company that can afford everything it possibly needs – or wants. Expensive Macintoshes clutter every room, all networked together of course, but the newly painted white walls provide an odd contrast to the >



> inhabitants, all attired in uniform gothic black, slouching through the corridors in true Genestealer style.

The Games Workshop is a typically British success story, which is to say distinctly odd and off-beat. The company began as long ago as 1975 when the legendary Steve Jackson (responsible for the Fighting Fantasy books), began importing TSR's Dungeons & Dragons series into the country. However it was not until the creation of the company's own Warhammer universe, and a management buy-out in the mid-Eighties, that the company really began to expand. By 1993 sales had grown to over £13 million, one year later they'd almost doubled to £24 million – and this year they hope to double it again. With over 80 shops in the UK alone (four new ones opened the week we're going to press!), more across Europe and growing markets within Japan and America, the sky seems no limit to what the company can do.

Games Workshop are clearly masters at capitalising on what they have. Not mentioning the mainstay of their business – the board games and toy soldiers – the company produce two monthly magazines (White Dwarf has monthly sales of over 70,000); a string of glossy guides costing between £10 and £20 a pop (selling 15-20,000 units); toy vehicles licensed to the likes of Hasbro and, of course, licenses to software companies like Mindscape and Electronic Arts...

My sensors reveal movement...

The Games Workshop's secret of success lies in the intricacy of its universe. The Warhammer world has grown into something with its own distinctive dynamic. Companies like EA know that when they license something, it will 'make sense' – the logic behind any isolated object will be complete. 'Skin deep' is the favourite criticism of Andy Jones, company Project Manager, when referring to the logic found in most other computer games. "Electronic Arts know that even though Space Hulk draws from only a tiny section of Warhammer, it has a resonance that only being part of something so much larger can produce. It's kind of complete".

In actual fact the Warhammer universe consists of two worlds. Plain Warhammer is your 'normal' fantasy stuff; lots of manly thigh slapping, Warriors and Ogres battling away like buggery, swigging ale from massive kegs, debauchery and burping in-between. Warhammer 40,000 on the other hand, is an altogether darker universe, playing with cyberpunk themes and delving into Giger imagery to construct an arena that's far more 'serious', threatening and noir. Jones explains: "All of the action is set 40,000 years into the future, at a time when humanity stands at the final, bloody crossroads between survival and destruction... There's an ancient psychic that guides mankind. He's known as 'The Emperor', and he welds mankind into a single galaxy spinning Empire protected by the super-human Space Marines...."

In actual fact the whole thing gets a whole lot more complicated than this; their intricate virtual world has



been growing since its inception in 1983 and even those who have been involved since the beginning of Warhammer Time have to research the more arcane pieces of its history. It's enough to know, I was told, that Space Marines aren't a single entity but include a number of divisions – all on the same side, but rivals none the less. *Space Hulk* itself stars the 'Blood Angel' division, hence the game's by-line: 'Vengeance Of The Blood Angels'.

The storyline to the game posits a vast and seemingly out of control ship (a 'Space Hulk' whose "vastness is difficult to comprehend") on a crash course with the highly populated Imperial Planet Delvar. "The honour has befallen the Blood Angel chapter of the Imperial Marines to board this gargantuan hulk and somehow divert it from its course. Fearsome, four-armed Genestealers, hybrids armed with guns and missiles, a 'Hivemind-controlling-Patriarch' (a beast of immense power and malign presence), all infect the rotting hulk." It's your job to cleanse and burn your way to the "heart of the sickness, sweep the foul spawn before you like weeds before the scythe" and re-route the ship. A tough job – but then some one's gotta do it...

They're closing fast...

Space Hulk was first released on the PC and Amiga in 1993. However 3DO *Space Hulk* is no mere port, as the game's design document makes clear: "The 3DO has outstanding capabilities which will be fully utilised." So gone is the PC's cluttered assembly of tiny monitor screens and miniature monsters. Instead, there's a glorious full screen window on the horrors to come. The result is not only better than the PC original, it sets entirely new standards for this type of game on any format. Graphics are remarkably high res with some remarkable texture maps – especially when a Genestealer bites a bullet and

globules of red blood Jackson Pollock the walls.

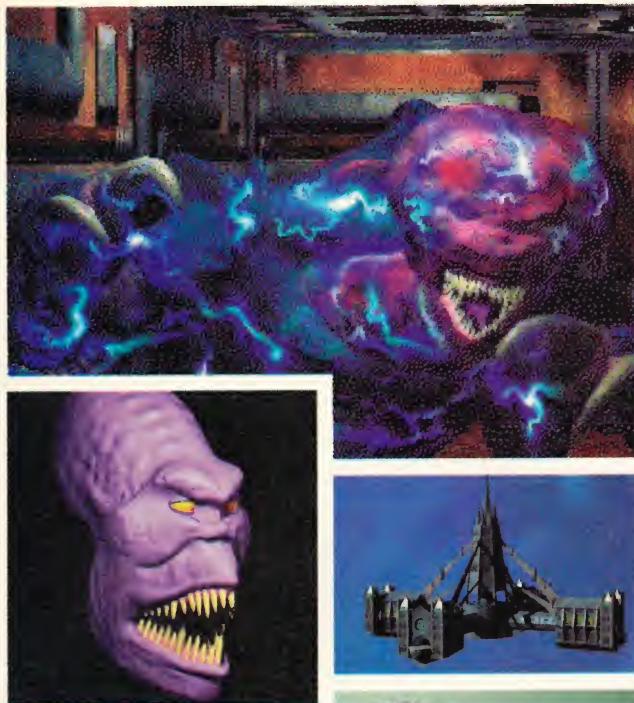
Incredibly, initial astonishment at the quality of the graphics only grows. Let a Genestealer get too close, and you'll have to fight it in hand-to-hand combat. Those of you who've played *Doom* will know that this close your foe is usually a Rorschach test of bitmapped pixels. In *Space Hulk*, EA have achieved the unthinkable. Nose to fang with a Genestealer and, if anything, the creature is even more sharply defined than when distant. The gruesomely realistic face – shaded with precise, ray-traced lighting – looks entirely convincing. This isn't M2-style MIP mapping, rather the programmers have several different graphics sets for the creatures. As a Genestealer comes charging toward you, the game scales one graphic set until – just before it distorts – the game imperceptibly switches to a new, higher res set. The technique is clever, the effect is simply terrifying – just as in real-life, the closer a creature gets, the sharper and more convincing its gleaming incisors become!

Another new addition is the ability to look up and down. "What we plan to do," says David Wilson, EA's PR Manager, "is have Genestealers hanging onto ceilings and pipes, dropping down when you pass... If you haven't properly surveyed your surroundings, you're going to be in trouble, big trouble..."

What this all shapes up to is a game that pumps out atmosphere-laden oxygen by the tanker load. Moving through the Hulk's corridors, with Genestealers coming from every direction, is an experience that puts you on the edge of your seat. As David Wilson says: "It's one of those games that it's essential to play in the dark, all by yourself. Do that and it'll scare you shitless."

...They're behind you

Control your terror, if you can, and besides the graphics you can admire a remarkably smart and involving tactical challenge. In the game, you control not one but four Marines. The first of these is directly under your control,



Andy Jones, left, Projects Manager at Games Workshop, whose RPG provides the involving and sophisticated backdrop for the game.



Above, one your Space Marines attacks a Genestealer. Seeing your fellow Terminators move around in their huge, bulky armoured spacesuits is a real thrill. They really do seem intelligent, automatically opening fire if they see an enemy. Below left, terminating an enemy leaves behind plenty of carnage with blood splattered all over the walls. Below right, the Genestealer shows off its Gigeresque inspiration. Like the Alien, Genestealers reproduce by taking over the bodies of their prey.



i.e. he's 'you' and is controlled via a first-person perspective. The other three Marines are controlled by pre-set commands – you tell them where to go, and what to do when they get there, in out-game periods known as 'Freeze Time'. Making the most of these resources requires thoughtful planning.

At the start of the game you're in charge of nothing, however. In fact you're not even allowed into real combat as such. Instead, to prove you're worthy to enter the Blood Angel sect, you have to undergo their 'initiation' ceremony. 'Mind bending drugs', hypnosis and sorcery allow a Priest to suspend a 'Terminator' such as yourself in a trance-like belief that he's actually taking part in a mission. The priest can then evaluate the worth of the player. Fail his tests and you're out. Pass and you can begin the game proper...

In fact once you've passed the initiation ceremony you can do one of two things. You can opt to play Historical Missions, effectively Training Missions, or you can embark on the true Blood Angel Campaign. The Historical Missions include the original Space Hulk board game missions, the best of the PC floppy version missions, a 'Necromunda mission' (a single but huge mission set on the mining planet, Necromunda) and The

Rise Of Dante ("Dante is the Commander of the Blood Angels, six of his most daring individual missions are compiled here as an exercise to see how others match up to his excellence"). In this training mode you can choose to be a simple Terminator, or their leading Sergeant.

Choose the Blood Angels Campaign on the other hand, and you play for 'real', against Genestealers whose existence takes on a physical, flesh-ripping form. Here you start at the lowest rank and must work your way up the chain of command by proving yourself in battle. According to game designer Nick Wilson, each new campaign here will have a "much more flowing feel to it than the PC version". Each mission has aspects that are affected by the performance of the Terminators in the previous mission, and all should flow on logically from each other.

Each of these missions has some form of objective, many taking the form of recovering technology, or 'flaming' rooms and their inhabitants. As well as these group objectives there will also be individual ones. These can be general like holding a specific doorway, or much more specific: 'Locate and destroy the control panel.' You can choose whether to obey these orders or not, but eventually you want to be the one giving them...

Aaaagh!

Space Hulk has only just gone into Alpha testing, but it's already apparent that when it's released this August it will generate mass acclaim in the press, hysteria in the gamesplaying public. Arcade fans will delight in the game's ultra-violent scenario, the sheer adrenaline-rush of having Genestealers explode out of every shadowed hideaway, the jaw-snapping terror of hand-to-hand combat. More serious players cannot fail to love those simpler, primordial emotions, but will also be hooked by the game's ingenious campaign structure, the tactics of organising squads of men and the sacrifices needed for ultimate success...

Space Hulk is, at heart, the quintessential Electronic-Arts game in its adult, incredibly in-depth concept and unbelievably professional attitude. As the PlayStation makes its flashy, arcade-hyped debut, *Space Hulk* provides 3DO owners with a far richer, far more engrossing world which makes even M2, for now, entirely unnecessary. □ dw

• *Space Hulk: Vengeance Of The Blood Angels* will be published by EA in August.

3DO Magazine

Star Appeal

The Daedalus Encounter from Panasonic

A \$2 million budget, movie-style special effects and Wayne's World star, Tia Carrere, certainly attract your attention – but does mega-budget plus mega-babe really equal mega-gameplay?

Mechadeus' ultimate objective is "to achieve feature film production values with virtual characters and virtual worlds," according to company president John Evershed. Yet while we await a machine able to render Marilyn Monroe in realtime, Evershed isn't sitting around impatiently twiddling his thumbs. *The Daedalus Encounter* is perhaps the most spectacular attempt yet to make that dread genre, the interactive movie, really work.

Just as with a real movie, Tia Carrere was hired as much for her fame as her acting abilities: "people relate better to the product if they relate to the talent," according to Evershed. Along with her co-star, Christian Bocher of MTV's Limboland, Tia shot all her scenes in a traditional, Hollywood blue-screen studio. An Ultimate 3D Studio camera was used to filter out the backdrops, making the footage instantly ready for integration within Mechadeus' virtual sets. To further speed FMV composition, the camera's movement was computerised to produce data files – later used to control 3D Studio's virtual



cameras as they panned across virtual backdrops for the relevant scenes.

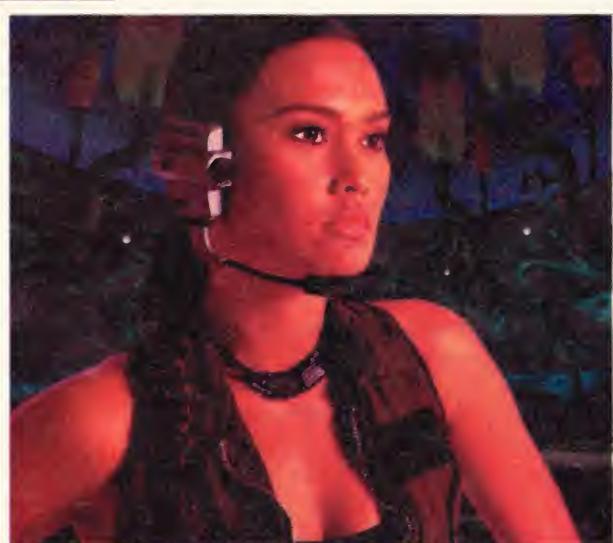
Daedalus' sets began life as wire-frame models created by animators working on Pentium PCs, no less than 15 networked together and running 3D Studio. Surface textures were then added by artists using Photoshop, while post-production crews worked on Apple Macs to

seamlessly assemble live-action, rendered imagery and special effects. To complete the FMV cliché, Silicon Graphic workstations were also used – specifically for

Panasonic®

organic structures, such as monsters and the alien ship itself. Their textures were researched by a visit to the San Francisco zoo, with crabs and spiders providing particularly gruesome inspiration!

To simplify ship exploration, Mechadeus adopted





Above, Tia Carrere and Christian Bocher at work on a traditional Hollywood bluescreen studio. For space scenes, the actors' faces were rendered as high resolution texture maps and placed on the faceplates of 3D Studio model spacesuits.

Apple's QuickTime technology to explore the various 3D sets they'd created. This allows the player to choose a direction at various branching points, the resulting movement being streamed off disc as a QuickTime movie. To increase the interactive feel, Mechadeus also developed *Mechadeus* software. This essentially overlays invisible control graphics on FMV footage, so clicking a cursor on a certain area allows you to move that way, or maybe fire a laser there.

Boxed In

On the PC the results are unusually effective. The intro sequence looks like a trailer for the latest Jim Cameron blockbuster, while in-game graphics are no less impressive. Unlike most games of the genre, the acting is good

enough to draw you in, while the soundtrack provides an excellent sense of 'being there'. The main draw, however, is a strong narrative drive and very smart game design.

Despite the hi-tech hardware, Mechadeus have mostly gone in the opposite direction to Digital Picture's obsession with fast-paced interaction. While *Supreme Warrior* sought to accelerate FMV interaction to the speed of an arcade beat-'em-up, *Daedalus* features long stretches where you sit and wait for an opportunity to interact. Your *RoboCop*-style awakening – after the dramatic intro you've become a 'brain-in-a-box' – involves a convoluted scene where all you have to do is click on 'yes'. The fact that this is at all bearable, indeed generally enjoyable, comes down to the fact it really does feel like tak-



This PC screenshot shows the game in action with an FMV window surrounded by control options such as analyse, diagnostics and deploy probe.

ing part in a movie. Your part may not have many lines, but there's plenty of puzzles and action to make for an overall intriguing experience.

Later on the interaction does become a bit more arcade-like, but it's the imaginative plotting and variety of gameplay that's most impressive. A routine puzzle to switch around light paths is suddenly a lot more enjoyable when Tia's life depends on it. And if you do fail, the game deftly allows you to jump straight back into the puzzle rather than sit through all the scene-setting FMV.

As a game it's hardly in the same league as say *Space Hulk*, but as a stylish, and moderately interactive diversion *Daedalus* looks very promising. By all accounts, Panasonic's 3DO conversion looks even better than the PC original, so look forward to an in-depth review next issue. □ ssw

• *The Daedalus Encounter* is due out in June

3DO Magazine

KNOWING THE MACHINE GOD

Mechadeus's President, John Evershed, actually got his first job with online consumer trials in Canada. After moving to San Francisco, he worked for a company networking public-access kiosks before setting up Mondo Media with partner Diedre O'Malley. Dedicated to producing multimedia presentations for companies like Intel and Microsoft, Mondo soon became a big success. By 1989, however, its staff was looking for a new direction and entertainment software seemed the obvious answer.

Although Mechadeus wasn't formed until 1993, it certainly hit the ground running. By the end of that year, their *Critical Path* PC CD-ROM had been released to generally positive reviews. While expert gamers could complete it in about an hour, it had a genuinely cinematic feel and gameplay was novel. Nowadays, Evershed dismisses it as a mere (\$325,000!) demo, knocked together in four months to prove the concept. *The Daedalus Encounter* is the real thing – it took fourteen months to produce and sprawls across no less than three discs.

To produce this enormous project, the company now has some forty different employees and millions of dollars worth of hardware. Several new PC projects are already in development for release later this year, with Panasonic keen to acquire 3DO conversion rights.

MECHADEUS

Shooting Stars

StarFighter 3000 from Krisalis

At a generally dull Spring ECTS, Starfighter 3000 soared above the overly familiar opposition to create a real sensation. Super-fast 3D, good gameplay and amazingly just four months old. Stuart Wynne spoke to the people behind it.

They don't make them like they used to be a familiar refrain of videogame veterans, people who remember when programmers worked out of their back bedrooms, following their instincts rather than marketing plans. Andy Hutchings and Tim Parry remember those days well because, for them, it was only last year.

Known as FedNet, the programming duo started out developing for the Acorn Archimedes. While technologically advanced – it uses a similar ARM CPU to 3DO's – it's largely restricted to the educational market. Ironically, the fact that games rarely sell more than 5,000 copies was ideal for FedNet, allowing them to not only write their own games but also to publish them as well.

All that changed last December when Krisalis convinced them to abandon their four-year-old commitment to the Archie and move in-house. Krisalis themselves have plenty of experience on the Archimedes – they produce numerous conversions for the machine – and have also become close to 3DO. Besides giving the format its first platformer with *Soccer Kid* for 3DO, they've also converted *Battle Chess* and *Alone In The Dark* for other

publishers. It didn't take long to spot the potential for a 3DO *Starfighter*.

As conversion work began, the Archimedes game kept selling steadily. Channel 4's *Digitiser* awarded

it 86% and promptly placed in their top ten of the year's best games. Then came the Spring ECTS...

but a fully interactive demo – pick up the pad and play!

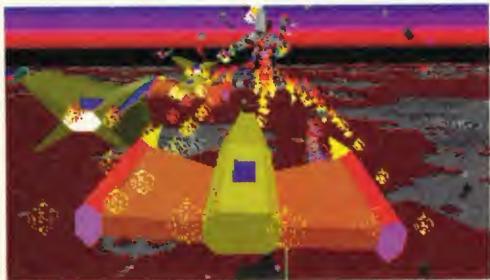
Unsurprisingly, Hutchings says working with the 3DO system was relatively easy. "Normally we use machine

code – this is our first time with C and it's a lot easier." C is pretty much standard for superconsoles and most of 3DO's programming libraries are supplied in C, which made them quick to develop. There can be a price paid in speed though and initially Hutchings

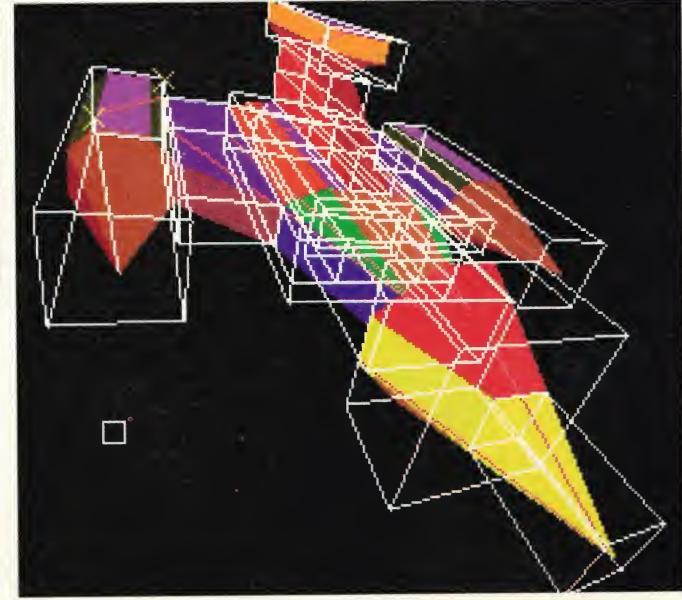
found maintaining frame rate and detail difficult. The team decided to rewrite the core graphics routines in

Showstopper

The 3DO *Starfighter* running at ECTS was just four months old, yet it still caused heads to turn. Here at last was a real 3DO flying game, one where you could zoom down into cities and slalom between skyscrapers, loose off lasers to ignite spectacular explosions and then fly off into space. What's more, this wasn't a video showreel



Above, while these very early, pre-production graphics are due to change, the shot still shows 3DO's superiority with semi-transparent clouds (created from cel), a lovely afterburner effect (more cells) and (cel) texture maps on everything. The Archimedes version, left, only has textures on the entirely flat ground. On the right you can see a 3D fighter in development.





Above, this early preproduction shot shows the fantastic detail of the game. Unlike some 3D games, the horizon stretches to infinity rather than shading off into a depth-cued blur. Best of all, everything moves at a nifty 15fps.

machine code and, as the ECTS demo showed, speed is no longer a problem. Currently the game runs at a nippy 15 frames per second – and Hutchings hopes to increase it further.

The 3DO system, contrary to many peoples' opinion, does have a polygon generator built-in which provided a workable chassis to build the game around. "We just have to address the correct registers and the system automatically plots the 3D." The texture mapping is similarly handled in hardware by the twin graphics engines, which map animation cels onto the polygons.

Cels are also used for numerous neat touches such as a wonderfully vivid jet exhaust, translucent clouds and truly spectacular explosions. While many 3DO artists use a single cel for explosions, *Starfighter* overlaps dozens of tiny ones – this not only looks more spectacular, but allows for better flexibility. Blast a hill and fire sweeps outwards in a satisfyingly convincing fashion.

In The Shade

All these fantastic features make you wonder if you should mention that the graphics do look a tad garish. The merest hint to Hutchings brings laughter, "We know! You have to realise the artist knocked those texture maps out in just four days. The 3DO Company are supplying us with new techniques to handle cels with more control and colour... I like the cars in *Need For Speed*, they're probably the best 3D objects we've seen on 3DO – so something similar perhaps."

Hutchings is quite blasé about the potential of the game's 3D, even promising full light sourcing so that as you fly around shadows will move across the various polygons quite realistically. Asked whether this might slow the frame down, Hutchings is dismissive: "The ECTS version already had the ability to shade at no extra cost – it's just a question of implementing it. One of the advantages of our background is that we've learnt to do



things quickly rather than precisely. We know lots of short-cuts which are just as effective as more complicated algorithms without taking up all that processor time."

The game also benefits from not being overly bothered with ultra-realistic flight mechanics. "If you want realism, buy a flight sim!" Hutchings points out.



"*Starfighter* is supposed to be easily accessible fun. But having said that, it's still quite sophisticated with gravity factored in, atmospheric friction so the higher you go the faster you move, not to mention the way fast turns will dump speed.

Also, the same control algorithms used for your ship are applied to the enemy fighters – so when you're dogfighting you know they've got the same limitations as you. They may have a more powerful engine, but it's the same physics which makes it both more realistic and more fun."

It's certainly lots of fun even in its current, early stage. The 3DO Company signed up the American rights the day after they saw it and rate *Starfighter* high within their upcoming roster of mega-games. An Xmas release means there's still plenty of time on the project yet, with Hutchings even promising full Surround Sound for a totally immersive experience.

After *Starfighter*, Hutchings is eager to convert another old Archimedes game – *Stunt Race 2000* – a futuristic demolition derby. "We think a lot of developers miss the point when they get obsessed with realism. If you drive around Silverstone there's no huge jumps or anything – it's pretty boring really. In our games we want to be as wild as possible, it'll be like the movie *Death Race 2000* where you have to kill everything in sight!"

Hutchings is certainly very keen about 3DO, "we expect to be working on it for a good while yet" and is looking forward to M2. "It sounds very impressive and we always want to work on the forefront of technology. I can easily imagine a *Starfighter 4000* for M2!" □ ssw
• 3DO *Starfighter 3000* is due out in time for Xmas.

promising. Expect a big preview later in the year to examine how this prospective mega-game is developing!



After its ECTS success, FedNet has been bolstered by a pair of full-time graphic artists. From left, the team is Dave Colledge (Silicon Graphics intro/ingame presentation), Tim Parry, Mark Potente (ingame graphics) and Andy Hutchings.

GAME ON

Starfighter 3000 is structured around 20 planets, each with its own unique missions and large, wraparound landscape of between 1,000 and 16,000 game objects. You've got complete freedom of movement and can even zoom up to space – where your mother ship orbits along with various satellites and enemy ships.

The planets are all quite different – one is ruled by a warlord who his territory with castles and sculptures of himself! Missions are even more varied: you be can ordered to take out enemy squadrons, sink fleets of ships, seek and destroy special targets, defend your mothership or friendly squadrons, and even fly in formation with allied aircraft.

To help you accomplish your mission there's a full panoply of power-up weapons, including dumb-fire air-to-air and air-to-ground rockets, air mines, homing missiles and so on. There should be twice as many weapons as the original, and overall the game looks exceptionally

Studio Standards

Zhadnost, BattleSport & Blade Force from Studio 3DO

While companies like Ocean continue to dither over 3DO, the company's own publishing arm has suddenly become exceptionally formidable. A savvy mix of bought-in and internally produced titles look set to produce a constant stream of mega-hits.

Communist Conversions

Zhadnost the People's Party (previously known as *The All New People's Gameshow*) is Studio 3DO's unofficial sequel to EA's *Twisted*. Scripted to be crass, hip, 'switched on' yet ultimately cheesy it's yet another state-of-the-art skit on the American people and their ultimate cultural product: the TV game show. *Zhadnost* is set within the mythical country of Bizernia, a once Communist country going capitalist in the worst possible way.

The opening sequence is, without doubt, the funniest thing ever seen on a videogame – a huge FMV sequence introduces each character in turn, hidden camera footage revealing their hidden fantasies. A black market hood turns in as wicked a parody of Robert De Niro as you could imagine – unsurprisingly, his fantasy is to be

president of America. And if you stand in his way... "Now it would be a shame if any thing were to happen to that pretty head of yours, but it could quite easily be BLOWN OFF!"

The game pits your Bizernian alter ego character against other Bizernian contestants, competing to see who can earn the most cash. As with



Twisted, the most fun is having loads of people sat around competing. You can have up to four people involved and if there are different age groups involved (or one of you just happens to be a thicky) the "Artificial Stupidity" feature lets players handicap or double cross their opponents. In all, there are apparently 2000 plus interactive challenges, including Full Motion Video jigsaw puzzles, visual memory tests, pop culture quizzes and concentration games.



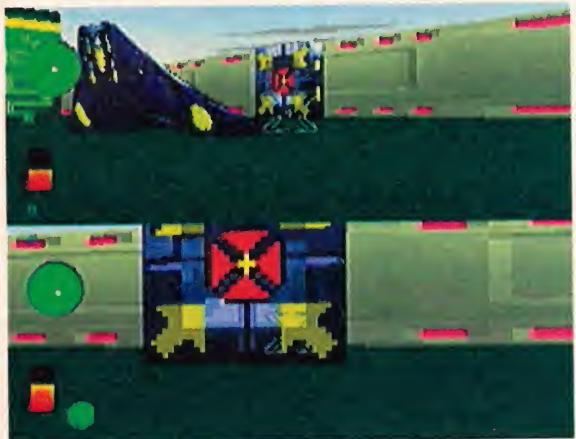
In essence, *Zhadnost* promises to live up to that dread phrase – fun for all the family (and your mates too). The presentation is brilliantly slick, the soundtrack is great, the satire of gameshow culture is so sharp it makes your teeth ache and gameplay... well, expect a review soon but even that seems to be pretty cool too! dw
•*Zhadnost the People's Party* will be published by Studio 3DO this summer.

More speed, more haste

While *Zhadnost* appears almost finished, *BattleSport* has only just gone Alpha. The various weapons menus still have test graphics – ED209 and RoboCop for example – while ingame visuals are clearly unfinished, with untextured floors and glitchy walls. But it still looks promising, right?

Wrong. Even in this very early version *BattleSport* has the feel of a real mega-game. You pick-up the pad to pose a few quick screenshots and end up frantically whizzing about, alternatively diving for cover and popping out to fry your opponent with lasers. The game's basic structure recalls LucasArts' 8bit classic, *Ballblazer*,

Below, one of the vehicles approaches goal – which usually floats above the ground to make things more tricky. But why bother scoring points when you can be bouncing missiles off your enemy?

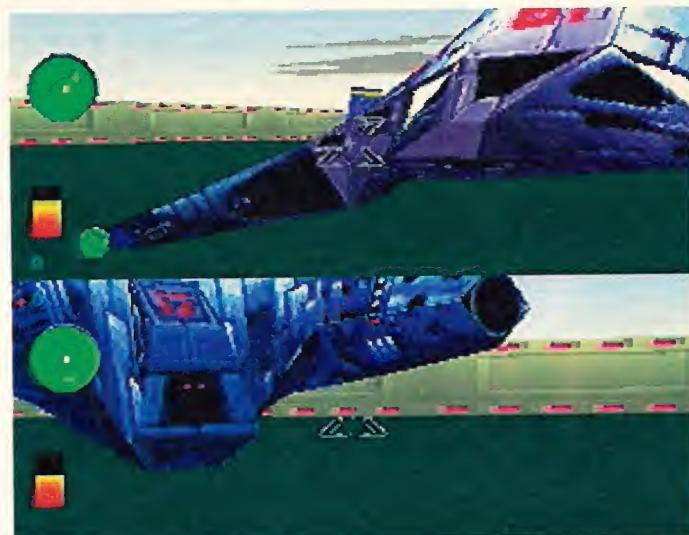


with both players competing to score goals in a fast-moving, 3D environment. The difference is that this is real 3D and you get weapons – lots and lots of 'em.. We tried just two – lasers (cute) and missiles (absolutely mega!). The thing with missiles is not only do you see a flashy explosion on hitting your enemy, but highly convincing shards of debris fly into the air and the target craft goes whizzing backward as if it's been blasted with a howitzer.

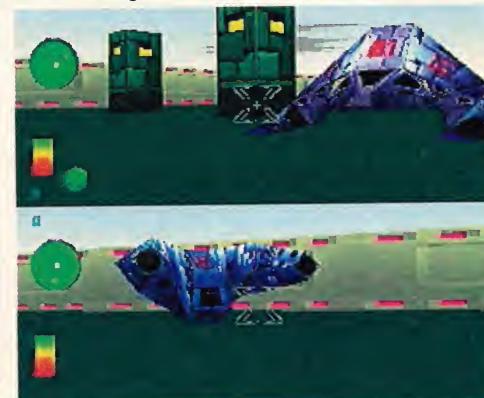
Now that's fun!

Also fun is the 3D. Not only do you get various buildings to play hide and seek around, but you can briefly 'jump' into the air (useful for attempts on the floating goal) and even hit ramps to really get airborne. The speed at which everything moves is simply excellent and you soon become totally preoccupied with hunting your opponent down. In this it's similar to the PlayStation's pretty *CyberSled* – only with far more gameplay, speed and sheer fun.

So far, the programmers appear to be mainly concentrating on gameplay and it's



paying off. However, the team's graphic flair is also evident in the various objects you encounter – exactly what's that floating eye for? – and especially the superbly texture-mapped vehicles. The finished game will offer a big choice in both vehicles and power-ups.



BladeForce

After last issue's exclusive preview, we can only add that development is progressing very smoothly. The ECTS version still lacked anything in the way of enemies, but the 3D engine more than lived to expectations. Not only do the 3D graphics look absolutely gorgeous, but the 30fps frame rate makes for a beautifully quick responsiveness. The finished game will have seven levels, split into four huge areas – 3DO claim a single level of *BladeForce* will be bigger than some entire games. **ssw**
•**BladeForce** should be available this Summer.



The Steel Medusa is a bank robber with a fondness for heavy weaponry – approach with extreme caution.



All in all, *BattleSport* should mark an amazing debut for developers Cyclone – a brand-new start-up formed by an ex-3DO PR man. As a somewhat strongly worded fax to 3DO Europe made clear, Cyclone are committed to and very confident of producing superbly playable games. Next on line should be *Captain Quasar*, a cartoon-styled, isometric 3D game which we expect to preview next issue. □ **ssw**

•**BattleSport** will be published this autumn by Studio 3DO.

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Wing Commander III

The Heart Of The Tiger

Publisher: Electronic Arts © 01753 549442 Developer: Origin Save Game: 5 SRAM slots Price: £TBA Available: June/July

The *Wing Commander* series has always been a flagship for PC CD-ROM gaming. Until recently, no other format had the storage capacity, the raw processing muscle or the RAM to really handle the series. And the latest, \$5 million instalment is by far the most technically advanced yet. Its arrival late last year caused near hysteria in the PC press and frantic over-the-till activity at shops. So can the endlessly delayed 3DO conversion really surpass its progenitor?



Above, a Kilrathi destroyer explodes, but Col Blair knows the war is going badly (left). Angel (bottom), faces a fate worse than death as a Kilrathi Emperor bays for blood. But is General Tolwyn any more sane?



A glance at the near endless opening credits reveals an army of people worked on the 3DO version and it's not hard to see why. Rather than simply hacking the original around until they had some crude 3DO approximation – a la *Quarantine* – Origin have totally rewritten the game to provide an even more awesome experience.

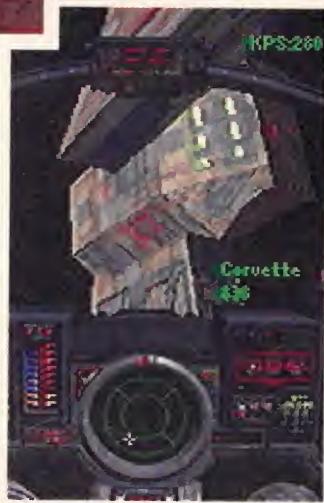
The original PC version is famous for its SVGA mode with incredibly complex 3D, however only a Pentium with 8MB of RAM could run it and loading a single mission took several minutes. The 3DO version simplifies the 3D, but compensates with high quality texture maps, fastloading and 16bit colour (a 65,536 palette as opposed to the PC's 256). It also runs faster with a 20 frames per second average compared to a Pentium 60's 12-15fps. There's occasional slowdown during exceptionally heavy combat, but it's minimal and overall the game feels very fast and responsive. Large battleships come across with a real feeling of scale, while 16bit colour makes everything brighter and less drab.

If the 3DO version manages a nifty impersonation of PC game graphics, in every other way it comfortably exceeds the original. As a very slick opening sequence makes clear, the 3DO game boasts full surround sound. Carefully judged ambient noise really pulls you in, even in conventional stereo. The sound of the lift accelerating,

The game begins, right, with a near TV quality intro. Circling Kilrathi fighters open celebrations over the Concordia's and the execution of captured survivors. After surveying the wreckage, Blair is assigned to the ageing rustbucket Victory.



Go to Barracks



Top, the Rec Room and lift (above) are a good place to meet your fellow crew members. Fortunately for them, docking with the Victory is automatic rather than manual (right).



> the whoosh of opening doors and various background chatter adds immensely to the atmosphere. This carries over to in-game action as well, with the sound of enemy fighters realistically tracking around behind you via Origin's custom sound routines.

Even more impressive is the FMV. Rather than use Cinepak, Origin were determined to adopt their own system which, until recently, gave very coarse results. Fortunately, for the finished product optimising routines have smartened everything up considerably. Careful direction and restricted movement mean that, for most of its length, the intro is near broadcast quality. The resolution is quite astonishing and considerably better than even Shock Wave.

The FMV is especially important because, of course, so much of the hype surrounding this product involves the Hollywood ambitions of its creators. Besides Mark Hamill as your own, rather grizzled alter ego Colonel Blair, there's Malcolm MacDowell as the secretive Commander Tolwyn and Ginger Lynn Allen as an unusually sexy flight mechanic.

Unlike Shock Wave, the actors aren't simply confined to routine reward sequences at the end of each mission. If you choose you can ignore your fellow crew and simply use the FMV for mission briefings, but that's not very sociable is it? In this game you can take the lift up to the

bridge, relax in the rec room, watch the news, even visit the barracks where a superbly comprehensive save option is available. In all these locations, there's a good chance you'll bump into a fellow crew member. Rollins provides gloomy gossip on the real state of the war, while pilots can reveal tactical detail – although judging their character is no less important when you have to choose a wingman for a vital mission. Often, characters' speeches will pause for you to make a response which can affect how they react to you from then on.

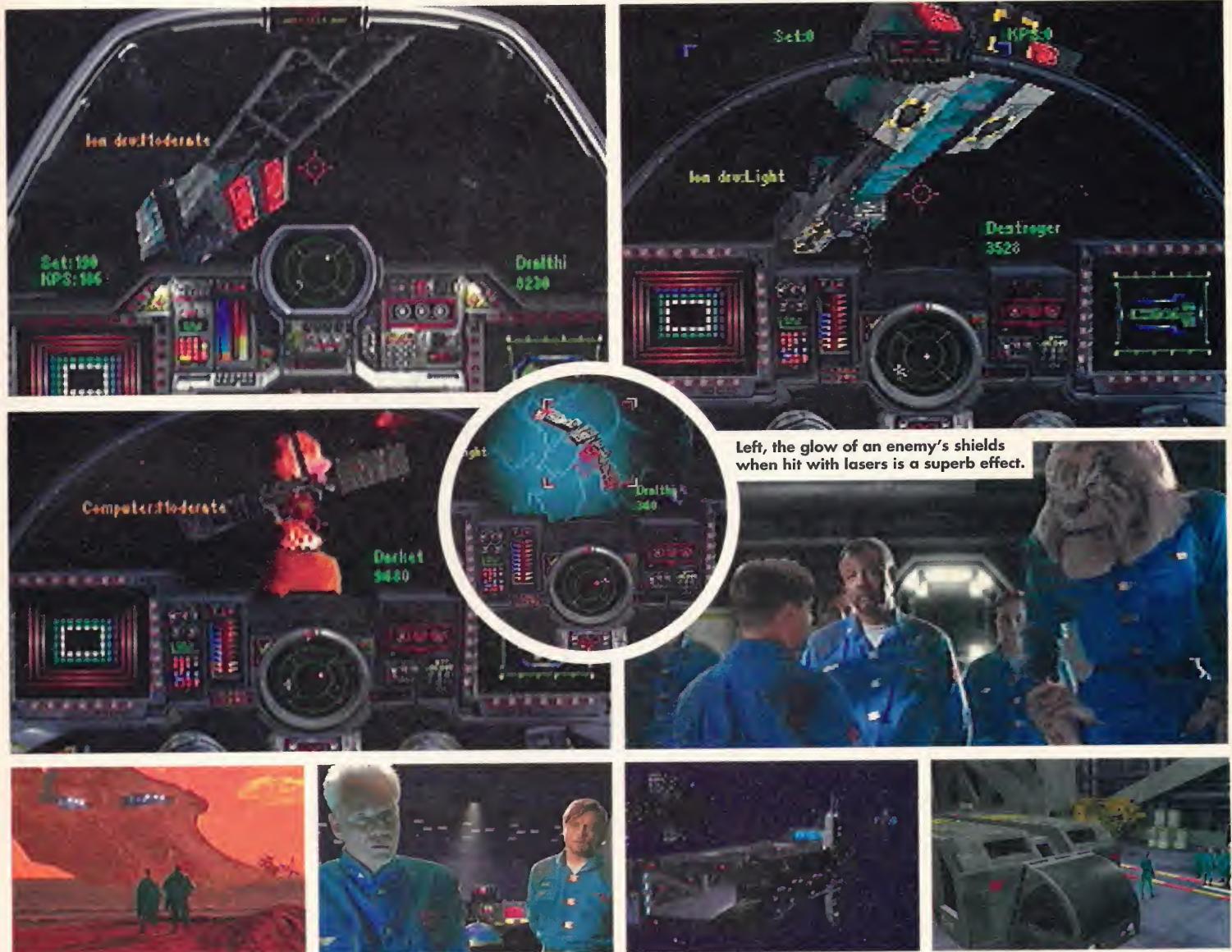
The actors provide a very human gloss on the mechanics of gameplay. They give success or failure a personal touch, especially when you're out there dogfighting and a favoured (or hated) wingman begs for help when under Kilrathi attack. This is especially true as the actors are generally very good, Mark Hamill may be

a touch wooden but his gravely voice is superb, while Jason Bernard plays Commander Eisen with real gravity. His scolding when you mess up a mission really does make you wince.

Of course, the main attraction is the development of the overall story arc. The game actually begins in the lair of the tiger, with the fiendish Kilrathi disintegrating some human prisoners. There's an inevitable exception, however. Having your hero's romantic interest threatened by a fate worse than death is a distinctly hokey plot device, while naming her Angel Devereaux and making her French for that sexy accent are simply embarrassing. Fortunately, the producers lucked out with their choice of actress, who miraculously turns a dreadful cliché into a believably feisty character. As she spits in the leonine face of her captors, a quest to rescue her seems suddenly very worthwhile...

The rest of the intro details Blair's assignment to the crumbling wreck of the VCS Victory, while Angel's fate is mysteriously subject to official secrecy from Tolwyn. The orchestral score rises to a suitable crescendo as your shuttle comes into land on the Victory, and it really does feel as if you've stepped into a sci-fi soap opera.

Highly Recommended
3DO
Magazine



Yet for all the state-of-the-art, epic Hollywood FMV, *Wing Commander III* is still very much a game and not an interactive movie. When the screen flicks into the cockpit after panning across your fighter's launch, well then it's all up to you. Push your joypad left and you see the flightstick lean over while the stars whip past. A keyboard's worth of more elaborate commands, such as chaff and communication with the enemy, is crammed onto the joypad via various shift button functions. This is a game which takes itself very seriously indeed.

At its heart *Wing Commander III* is very much an evolution of all that's gone before. Even when Kilrathi motherships were just 16-colour sprites being scaled about by a 386 PC, their movement was controlled according to 3D routines. At the end of the new episode, there is a planetary mission but otherwise it sticks to its familiar mix of escort, patrol and search & destroy missions – all located in very deep space. Yet while the overall structure is much the same as before, the look and feel of the game is transformed.

Enemy fighters are beautifully drawn with full light-sourcing so that shadows move to underline the 3D. While 3DO *Wing Commander* featured highly impres-

sive sprites, there were only a handful of different angles you could view a craft from. With 3D graphics, you can view a ship from any angle – when a wingman suddenly flies overhead, it's always a slightly different perspective. It also makes the tracking of the various laser, missiles and decoys a lot more convincing, especially with neat impact explosions and stunning, truly cinematic explosions when a craft blows up.

The 3D is probably most impressive when you fly escort for allied freighters or attack Kilrathi destroyers. Particularly awesome is being in a dogfight and being able to manoeuvre around, in full 3D, a huge freighter with lasers spitting between it and circling enemy fighters. The epic nature of the unfolding space battle suddenly becomes a great deal more involving when you see these huge ships lumbering overhead. At extreme close-up the textures can bitmap, but for most of the time you really do feel you're in a *Star Wars* movie. Sweeping low under an enemy battleship, seeing its upturned wingtips fill the sides of your screen, is truly amazing. At first, winning a battle is secondary to making daredevil reconnaissance passes, wheeling about the target before diving down to examine it from a new

angle.

If want a war in space, then basically you've got one. Besides mastering the complex controls, you also need to think about the game in 3D terms. The various combat manoeuvres detailed in the manual really do work and it's good idea to learn them! Although the difficulty level seems better judged than the first, legendarily tough 3DO *Wing Commander*, getting through all four discs will require real fighter pilot skills.

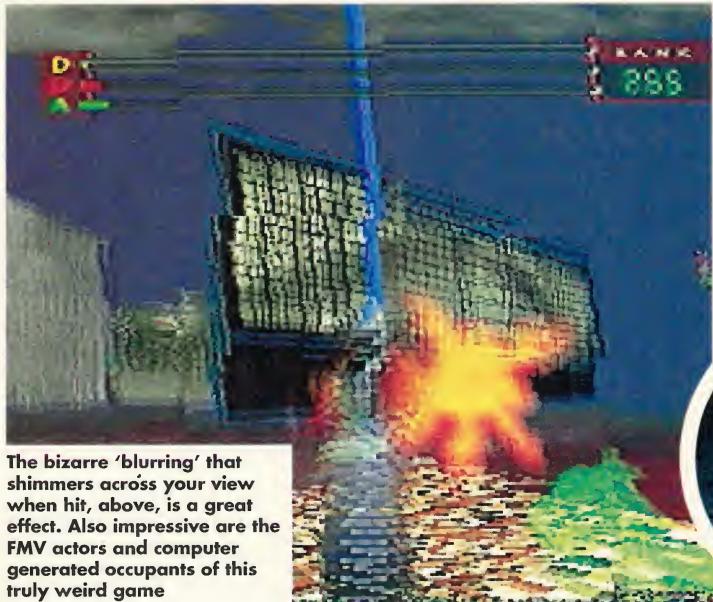
Overall, *Wing Commander III* is undoubtedly one of the year's most impressive releases. The 3DO version looks far better than the VGA mode most PCs will run it in, and is genuinely comparable to a Pentium running it in SVGA. Its superior presentation, faster frame rate and, most of all, its superquick loading will get any PC owner green about the gills. All this on a £400 console is simply astonishing. So if you fancy a leading role in the biggest sci-fi epic in the history of videogames, get your order in now. This is the real future of 'interactive movies', and prospective Luke Skywalker need look no further for a spectacular test of their Jedi training. □ ssw

3DO Magazine rating: ★★★★

Immercenary

Publisher: Electronic Arts © 01753 549442 **Developer:** Five Miles Out **Save Game:** 5 SRAM slots **Price:** £44.99 **Available:** Now

A heady concoction of cyberspace, astral projection and Quantum leaping sets EA's latest apart from the crowd. Dave Westley explores whether the future really is Perfect.



The bizarre 'blurring' that shimmers across your view when hit, above, is a great effect. Also impressive are the FMV actors and computer generated occupants of this truly weird game

First sight suggests developers Five Miles Out really have lived up to their tripped out name, melding a *Doom*-style blaster to a story right out of a Gibson novel. The gist of it is that you're mercenary enlisted to do battle in the virtual world that's taken over the future, a neither region misleadingly entitled Perfect. You must find and destroy Perfect 1, the SysOp of this world, and so save humanity from its binary fate.

Unlike *Doom*, knowing what the game's about is important and simply blasting everything in sight won't get you far. Double clicking on the A button reveals a map of Perfect, with a number of buildings marked in red. These represent the various domains of the most powerful Rithms that you must overcome to shut down the system. Defeat all seven in their lairs and only Perfect 1 'herself' will be left. Initially, this seems quite a formidable task.

Naturally, when you start the game you won't be in a position to tackle the guardians of Perfect. Status bars at the top of the screen reveal minimal energy and potential ratings for your three capabilities: Defence, Offence and Agility (ominously shortened to DOA throughout the game). Even if you're running at full power, you'll still have to rest often and recharge frequently by blasting minor characters. As you progress, your potential levels increase so you can store more energy, and by the end

of the game there's little that can stop you.

Your weakness early on gives *Immercenary* a very different feel to *Doom*. Abandoning yourself to a raging gun-lust will simply get you killed – and double-quick too. Instead you have to keep reason in charge of your faculties and practise stealth, using the virtual terrain around you to provide cover. A patient nature also comes in useful for interrogating characters in the DOAsys, a healing ground at the centre of Perfect. Maybe in this *Doom* variant you need to be more Sherlock Holmes, exploring with ingenuity rather than a rampaging brain-dead Rambo.

Appearances ultimately prove more virtual than real however. Increasing your DOA to level 1 merely requires you to follow three steps: (1) destroy a Rithm, (2) recharge yourself and (3) save. After the initial excitement of a new 3D world to explore has worn off the simplicity of this gameplay starts to wear thin. Even worse is the fact that while most games get more challenging as they progress, *Immercenary* actually gets easier. Not only does your DOA level keep improving, but you gain access to a massive variety of extremely powerful power-ups which, when used intelligently, make you near omnipotent.

The result is that after the first few tense hours things deteriorate into simplistic *Doom*-style action. It's not all bad for that fact – the graphics are powerful enough to



be both different and believable, with some of the lead sprites being gorgeous pieces of animation and artwork. There's also a dazzling array of visual effects – the 'Nukem' power-up leads to an incredibly realistic mushroom style explosion, while Huffmaning (stealing a rival Rithm's energy) produces an unusual, highly distinctive warping, smear effect which is superbly disorientating in the midst of battle.. Unfortunately, it's over far too quickly to succeed even as a simple blast-'em-up. I polished it off in well under a week and while the visuals may, occasionally, draw me back to this atmospheric, beautifully designed world, I doubt I'd be happy paying £50 for the privilege.

Overall then, *Immercenary* simply fails to deliver on its early promise and turns out to be uncomfortably stranded between the adventuring and blast-'em-up genres. It's a shame as Five Miles Out have built a quite brilliant graphic engine and wrapped both imaginative and seductive visuals around it, to often stunning effect. It really is a treat to behold. Maybe a sequel will amend matters, maybe the designers will know exactly what kind of game it is that they're trying to produce, but until then *Immercenary* can only be recommended to those with the cash to support such short-term, superficial delights. □ dw

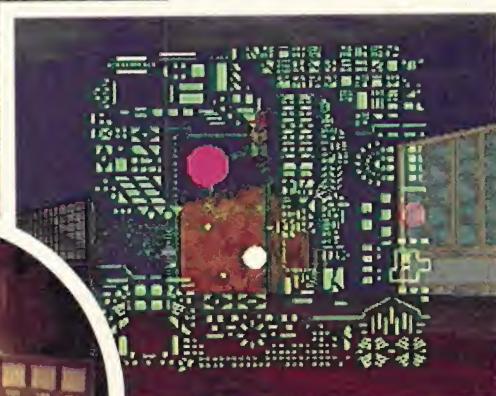
3DO magazine rating: ★★★



The interface to communicate with *Immercenary* characters is easy to use, far left, although it's not possible to ask "Why are you so damn odd?"



The texture-mapped buildings of *Immercenary* can get monotonous, above, so the map overlay, below, showing towers and important buildings is an essential aid to this VR world. Medusa, left, is much feistier than most of the other inhabitants of the game.



Supreme Warrior

Publisher: Acclaim **Developer:** Digital Pictures **Save Game:** 3 SRAM slots **Price:** £44.99 **Available:** Now

Digital Pictures enjoyed mixed reactions to their previous releases *NightTrap* and *Sewer Shark*, the opinion in 3DO Magazine One being that style was firmly winning over content, with both games being simplistic, FMV heavy products that did little to enhance the slurred reputation of interactive movies. The mega-bucks American company seems committed to the format however, pushing out the boat on this beat-'em-up which has two CDs worth of footage.

Set in a late 16th century Chinese province, it pits you against six mystically empowered warriors plus three Warlords, each specialising in either Mongolian Boxing, Dahong Boxing, Kung Fu or Wu Shu. You are a jack of all trades, but each defeat of an enemy earns you the right to practice secret moves, special skills and dirty tricks to take through the tournament, all achieved by executing a combination of key presses and directions. A save game lets you store progress and everything sounds, in theory, like a thoroughly conventional beat-'em-up.

However, once your fighter is led into battle, the novelty of *Supreme Warrior* becomes clear. The action is viewed from a first person perspective, with actors prancing around before you in a (small) FMV window,

A first person perspective beat-'em-up with high production values and great FMV combat footage, Supreme Warrior is an ambitious attempt to re-define the perception of combat games forever...

with your hands and feet visible in the foreground, punching and kicking away. A small selection of basic moves is available, the most important being the block if you're not to be floored within seconds, but roundhouse, hooks punches and chiyaps can all be strung together, combinations earning more points and 'Golden Moments' (when your opponent is most vulnerable) provide good 'kill' set-ups.

The footage is generally excellent, although one or two scenes are lit rather poorly, making the FMV window dingy. The rural locations are competently constructed, with plenty of extras whizzing about in the background, whilst the fighters themselves are dramatically clothed and painted, performing their undeniably skilful contortions with great gusto, and leaping from tall buildings rather impressively (you can't spot the wires). When you first take a punch or kick, it's dramatic, the camera reeling, the screen flashing red, and your female sidekick scurrying to pull you back to your feet. Similarly, connecting a fist with an opponent is good fun, as they tumble satisfactorily to the floor before retaliating twice as hard. Although it seems a bizarre format, it actually works rather well, visually, as the flashes of colour that blind you when struck allow the game to insert any of a variety of follow up sequences from your opponent. The fast pace and exciting camera work never lets you see the joins in the reams of

footage, testament to some brilliant work amongst Digital Pictures' designers.

And the overall effect is undeniably impressive, as you literally dodge and duck against the flurry of video punches. It almost hurts.

Sadly, however, *Supreme*



Warrior falls at a vital fence, since despite the wealth of combat moves available and the impressive visuals, the actual implementation of moves is woefully poor. Response times from your character are terribly slow, and this inadequacy, combined with the needlessly lengthy button sequences required to pull off a good move, make play agonisingly frustrating. The SSFIIX inspired method of combining a sequence of buttons to pull off a move just doesn't work with such unresponsive controls, making *Warrior* almost unplayable. It's impossible not to resort to frantic button jamming as you get kicked about the screen, screaming at how slowly your fighter responds. The key to success eventually reveals itself to be endless blocking, followed up by quick jabs, but this makes play boring, as you long for the instantaneous responses of a more conventional fighting game.

Other compromises for this FMV format include the obvious inability to jump over your opponent or pull back for some breathing space or lunge closer for the kill, and you soon feel defeated at endlessly being circled yourself, instead of being able to lead the action. Another disappointment is the training section at the front end of the game. Instead of allowing you to practise the various moves, it just spools of FMV demos of other fighters performing them, pretty pointless really.

All this excellent footage, innovative game design and inadequate gameplay seems par for the course for Digital Pictures then. If they'd spent longer refining this title until it worked they could have had a major 3DO release. As it is, *Supreme Warrior* is noteworthy more for the effort involved than the final product. □ mcw



Excellent acting, above, and stylish costume design, right, make *Supreme Warrior* a polished product.



3DO Magazine rating: ★★

Syndicate

Publisher: Electronic Arts **Developer:** Bullfrog **Save Game:** 5 SRAM slots **Price:** £44.99 **Available:** Now



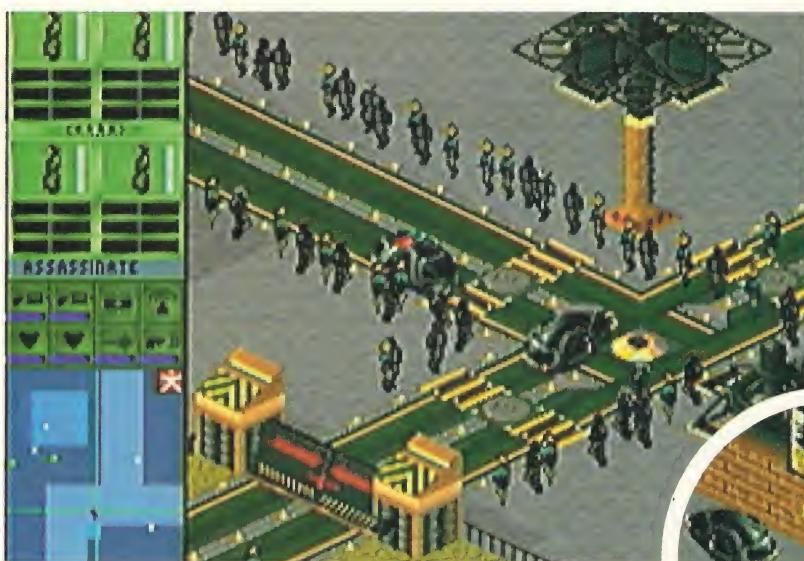
In the long and bloody history of videogames, there's never been a game quite like *Syndicate*. Relentlessly ruthless, spectacularly bloodthirsty and entirely amoral, this is a game for the assassin in all of us.



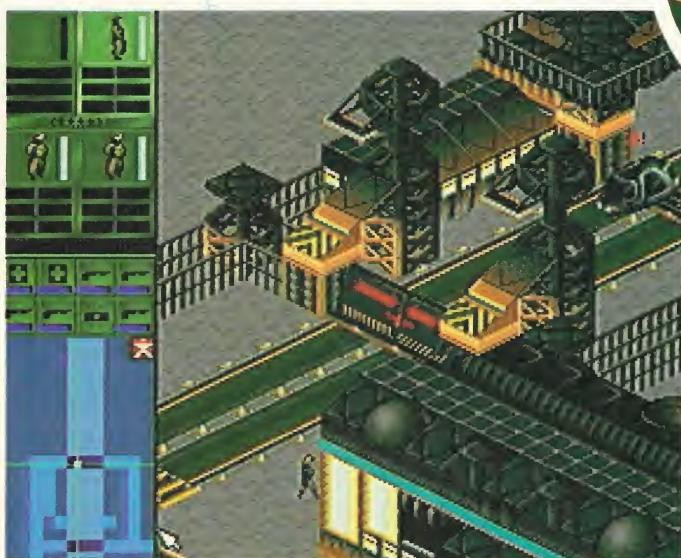
Important employee about to defect? Send the exec a message by having a team torch his wife with a flame-thrower. Allied agent about to be taken prisoner? Send in the cyborg boys and girls to blow his head off with Gauss guns. Videogames have never been renowned for their genteel manners, but *Syndicate* combines gruesome graphics with a noir vision comparable with any of its cinematic or literary inspirations.

Blade Runner is obviously the key text, itself a deft mix of borrowings from Metropolis and Philip K. Dick. *Syndicate's* agents mirror the minimalist, trench coated 'anybodies' that Deckard represented, realistic anti-heroes who wander the streets inconspicuously, until they pull out a shotgun (or flame-thrower or minigun). Also 'borrowed' are the famous Spinners, in truth only the most obvious homage to Syd Mead's classic designs. There isn't a single graphic in this game which couldn't have been a prop in *Blade Runner's* LA 2019 and, unlike like most 'inspired' artists, Bullfrog have actually done justice to their source. The soft neon streetlights, the banal blipverts and scurrying citizens all contribute to creating an utterly believable game environment. The cheery distance between player and game fostered by most games, with their bright, surreal visuals, is here eroded to grim effect. The further you progress on a mission, the closer you get to your agents on their missions of assassination and subversion, hurrying to move in and out of each city with a minimum of fuss and maximum cool.

Probably the most impressive borrowing, however, is the dystopian scenario which envelopes the entire game with a gloomy, but viciously believable satire of capitalism run rampant. Evil corporations are a key plot motor of most cyberpunk novels, but *Syndicate* develops that >



Get to version 3 of all the 'borg parts, and you've got the fastest agents in the world, above. An official is leaving town, left, and you've got to get through the cavalcade and kill him, avoiding or killing say, oh, two hundred guards.



Borrowing a local car is the only way to get through the security gates of some of the enemy syndicate territories, left. Driving around the local roads is fun, but you can still be identified and fired upon, so don't draw attention to yourself. Trains also make an appearance, to take you to the outskirts of territories.

> vision to stunning new heights of depravity. In this future, Governments have been overthrown and replaced by Syndicates (Mafias), each maintaining control of their territories by a mix of brainwashing and massive violence. It's a bold, nihilistic theme to wrap a game around, especially as you don't play any kind of saviour – unlike Deckard, there's no chance of redemption for your assassins. In fact the only difference between your syndicate and the rest is that it's smaller, making it that much harder to infiltrate and murder your way to world domination.

The first missions are exciting introductions to the game. Arm your cyborg team of four with as much weaponry and armour as possible. Divert some cash into R&D to research better cyborg parts for faster, stronger and more accurate agents. Check the mission brief and then wait for your agents to be deposited at the outskirts of an unsuspecting syndicate territory. At first, objectives are simple. Find and assassinate enemy agents, 'persuade' (brainwash) an enemy scientist, escort out a defecting employee – whatever, the relative brevity of these assignments mean you can play it calm and move in and out, quickly,

or risk exposing your as yet undeveloped agents with more blood-thirsty, kill everything in sight tactics. There's no penalty for wiping out innocent bystanders!

Later missions feature increasingly complex scenarios. A small town is holding out against advertising campaigns you're transmitting. Find and destroy all the (heavily guarded) Syndicate lords to leave the airwaves open for your marketing boys. A

Highly Recommended
3DO Magazine
rating: ★★★★
diplomat is travelling through a syndicate territory today. Stake out assassination points along the police-lined route to kill him... More so than any other game, Syndicate has a phenomenal sense of narrative, each mission a well crafted sci-fi potboiler in its own right. It's this sense of true interaction with an entirely believable alternate world, glossed with stylish visuals and ultra violence, that makes Syndicate such a deeply absorbing experience.

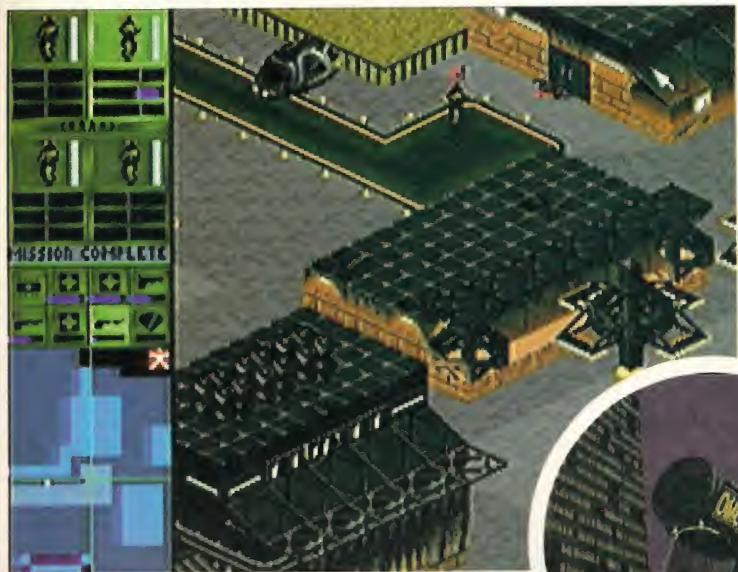
With infinite possible variations on the solution for each mission, transport routes to be sabotaged, documents to steal and scientists to 'persuade' and abduct, all spread across 50 mission, Syndicate is a serious gaming experience, that will reward strategists and arcade buffs

in equal measure. Most enjoyable, is the superiority of the 3DO version, which eliminates the tedium of Amiga disc swapping, whilst delivering the stark design and graphic violence omitted from inferior console versions. The soundtrack has been substantially tweaked too, although, to be honest, I found it a distraction when fire-bombing enemy buildings and agents – fortunately, you can customise the sound setting on the front end.

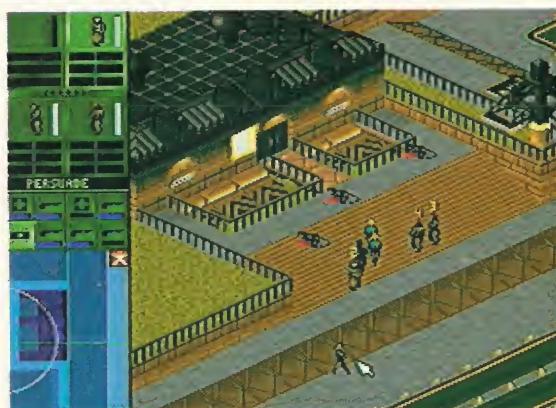
My only serious complaint is that EA didn't encourage just a few more refinements to this fine conversion. The movement of your agents is still a little slow, like the Amiga original, but whilst it didn't seem to matter there with mouse control, joypad play feels a bit lethargic. Also, with new missions available on PC, it's a shame 3DO owners couldn't have enjoyed some of these extra levels now, rather than waiting several months for an update disc.

These few niggles fail to detract from the near perfection of the game, however. A more stylish, involving, enjoyably British product you won't find – an unmissable experience. □ mcw

3DO Magazine rating: ★★★★



A whole world to be conquered, above, with strategy, tact and ultra-violence. Each mission brief is a skillfully worded, amusingly thinly veiled direction to cause maximum carnage, as demonstrated by your agents below, where a complex gets the heavy treatment. An early mission, right, against a fairly wimpy syndicate where scientists are protected by timid guards. They're easily taken out by your four agents, wielding shotguns and two 'persuaded' citizens.



Quarantine

Publisher: Gametek © 01753 553445 **Developer:** Imagexcel **Save Game:** 1 SRAM slot **Price:** £44.99 **Available:** Now

Imagine playing Doom with all of its adrenaline pumping, first person perspective violence. Then imagine being able to get into a steel enforced, gasoline guzzling vehicle of destruction and simply squish those enemies under four spiked wheels. Sound too good to be true? Does, doesn't it.

On the PC Gametek have gone from strength to strength releasing a string of successful titles culminating with Dennis Hopper headlining in *Hell*. According to the company it's all part of an ambitious philosophy to raise the company profile and engender brand loyalty. The release of *3DO Family Feud* set back their cause somewhat, but hopes were high that *Quarantine* might make up for it.

The opening FMV suggests Gametek are on the right track. While content is identical to the PC version, quality has had a total overhaul. Sit at a reasonable distance and it's broadcast quality, in spite of the fact that more is happening on screen than in *Natural Born Killers* 'toon mode. While the dreams of your digital doppelganger are dominated by the white picket, bourgeoisie world of *The Graduate*, an alarm clock reveals a physical existence of *Taxi Driver*, *Escape From New York* and *Deathrace 2000* – heavy-duty mutilation as a walled in city inexorably tears itself apart.

It's brilliantly done – the acting hammy and overdone, becoming almost a burlesque when a dog gets thrown on top of your cab's bonnet for no apparent reason. Your digital counterpart empties his gun in every direction, CondorMan style, whilst a wrinkly bumps about in the back, alternately shrieking and clapping as munitions rumble and ricochet and a jarringly mellifluous Lemonheads style dirge (which continues in-game) limps about in the background. For setting the scene it's superb, but if you want to know the reasons for the collapse of order – and how you're going to escape it – you have to read the '*Kemo Driver's Handbook*'.

The year is 2047. For nearly 14 years Kemo has been a prison, walled in by the Omega Corp who, unable to cope with the level of crime, boxed in everyone – the good, the bad and the ugly. After initial anarchy, a Hobbesian state of nature ensued with the self-preservation conscious populace setting up a 'government' in an attempt to secure a degree of peace. The attempt was futile. Omega Corp injected the city's water with 'Hydrgine 344', a drug that was supposed to 'remove all criminal thoughts' but instead reacted with



The FMV intro to *Quarantine* is of a remarkably high quality, ultimately serving only to emphasize the poor quality of the in-game graphics.

the viruses of the polluted supply and turned half the populace into scary-eyed Michael Ryan's.

Naturally you want out. Naturally

it ain't gonna be easy. Being a taxi driver is

a way to earn a lot of cash and discover what's 'going down' in a city. In Kemo it's also a way to wind up dead – and fast. Those lucky enough to have wheels in the city use them like modern day chariots of fire, arming them with vicious guns and incendiaries, plating them with steel and heading out onto mean streets to cause murder and mayhem. The aim of your game is to earn cash and glean information picking up rides in the city, while doing your best to avoid the screwed up schizoids who inevitably come with bigger guns than your own.

And so you start. The Cab that you find yourself within is remarkable responsive – simply push the D-Pad in your chosen direction and you're away. A fires your minor weapon, B your major weapon, X accesses a map. It's pretty intuitive stuff, too intuitive perhaps as it's easy to get cocky – go too fast and you crash your car; something that happens all too frequently anyway. An indicator informs you of the state of your car with 100%

being perfect, 0% a write off. And writing off your cab means game over.

Fortunately scattered throughout Kemo are Repair and Weapon shops. Within them you'll not only be able to knock the dents out of your car, but power it up. 'Nitro' speed-ups are available, as are hover engines that allow you to glide over mines; you can coat you car with Steel, Reinforced Steel or even Plastisteel and then fit it with every conceivable type of weapon – and then some.

Of course, to be able to do all of this you're going to need cash. When you pick someone up you'll automatically be taken to the Map mode. Here a red marker will indicate your position, a white one where the would-be passenger wants to go. A small box at the side of the screen informs you how much they're willing to pay, and how soon you've got to be able to get there before he/she will starts to deduct money from the fare. This is one of the few points in the game where grey matter is important. You have to work out (a) whether you can get to the destination on time and (b) whether what they're offering is sufficient to justify the attempt. At the start of the game, when you have no funds to fall back upon, this mental balancing act can be a make or break thing.



You have been warned.

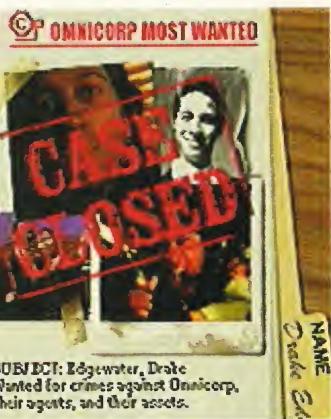
Picking up fares, racing across town to their destination point and slowly upgrading your cab is the game really. The relentless *Doom* style action and the desire to find the next level shields the game from encroaching tedium – keeps you motivated when your cab gets wrecked for the umpteenth time. Yet even though there's an undeniable hook, *Quarantine* still isn't anywhere near as good as it could have been – quite simply because Gametek haven't made enough of an effort. Roads are basic black strips, pavements oddly purple. Texture mapping is confined to the buildings and generally quite crass. Any comparison to *Need For Speed* or *Shock Wave* is simply too painful to think about.

So there you go. *Quarantine* – a brilliant concept, inadequately executed. Despite being a far better machine than the PC, the graphics on the 3DO version of *Quarantine* are in every way inferior. Ignore that fact, however, and you'll find a highly playable, if somewhat simplistic blast-'em-up that will tide you over until Art Data's superlative *Doom* arrives to blow us all away in July. □ dw

3DO Magazine rating: ★★



While cars look okay at a distance, above, let them get too close and they pixelate badly, left. That, coupled with the drab 2D artwork for the dashboard, makes for a visually unimpressive gaming experience. Below, the rather nice still you see post-death.



SUBJECT: Edgewater, Drake
Wanted for crimes against Omnicorp,
their agents, and their assets.

Chasing, blasting and cutting off other cars is great fun, although *Need For Speed* it ain't. There's not too many customers as attractive as the FMV guest, left, either. The detail on the cab interior is nice though, creating a good cyberpunk feel.

Flashback

Publisher: US Gold © 0121 6253366 Developer: Delphine Save Game: Password Price: £44.99 Available: Now

Virgin's mega-hyped *Heart of Darkness* may not be due until Xmas, but its unofficial 16bit prequel has already been updated and uprated for 3DO. Vibrant new colours and exceptional 3D Studio animations complement its classic gameplay.



Today's barely interactive, FMV-heavy interactive movies have given the genre a dire reputation. *Flashback*, and its revolutionary predecessor *Another World*, are different. They appropriate the language of films – involving storylines, close-ups, cutaways and so on – without losing the gameplay. Despite its age, *Flashback*'s individual graphic style is just as welcome today as it ever was, especially with the introduction of even more vivid 3DO colours and a whole new soundfield.

Like *Another World*, *Flashback* is essentially a platformer, but one whose gameplay is set apart from the competition by the way its central character, Conrad Hart, is controlled. There are no less than 13 different moves – from small and long jumps to somersaults and climbs, all with a gun in hand, ready for action. Each move is a marvel of realistic, rotoscoped animation and entirely convincing. In a fighting game like *SSIIIX* such control would, of course, be taken for granted, but in this genre such versatility is both unusual and enjoyable, making *Flashback* instantly fresh to pick up and play.

Another innovative feature of the Amiga original was the insertion of cut-away scenes at important junctions to reward the discovery or use of an object. They're here too but for the 3DO system they've been replaced with 3D Studio affairs. While bringing the game 'up to date' visually, it's nevertheless a risky strategy to take. The

original cut scenes kept to the style of the in-game graphics, cool and simplistic, and so caused little disruption to the 'flow' of narrative and action. Here, however, the contrast is very much more marked and it could easily have jolted the player out of that immersive, cinematic feel. That it doesn't is thanks to the quite exceptional artistry of the sequences and their brilliantly incisive direction.

The storyline to *Flashback* borrows freely from a wide range of sci-fi films and books. You awaken in the artificial jungle of the planet Titan, with no memory of past events nor the circumstances which brought you to the place. A holocube lying nearby gives you an immediate goal – avoid or destroy all mutant guards and get yourself to New Washington, pronto. It's a bit like *Total Recall*, only unlike Schwarzenegger your first awkward movements will be far from agile, and your strength less than half that of those around you.

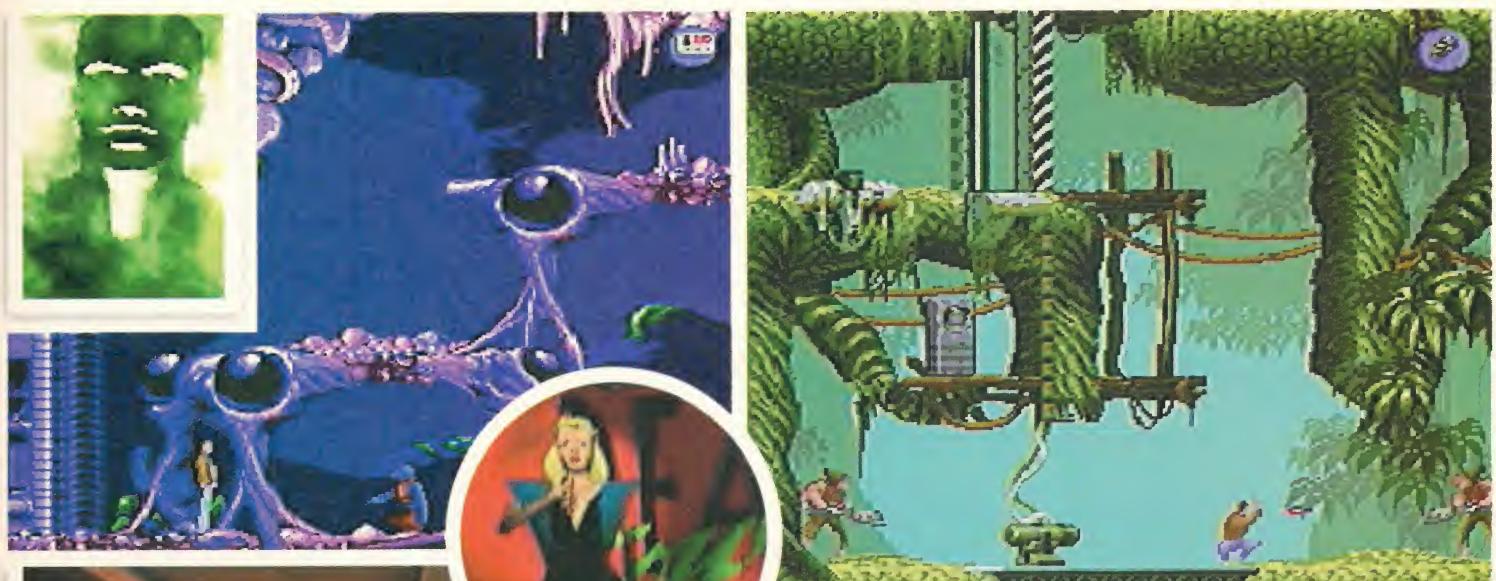
Fortunately, the first level starts you off simply, allowing you to get used to the novel sprite and its brilliant fluidity. As such the plot goes on hold, waiting until you've mastered the basics and can move on to the second level. This is set in New Washington, where the vibrant greens of the artificial rain forest give way to the drabness of a city that seems to be in permanent shadow. Upon your arrival you're greeted by an 'old friend', Ian, who straps you in a chair, presses a few knobs and

The whole game looks like a highly stylised sci-fi movie, with well designed enemies, above, drawing laser pistols in a flash. Reaction time is a factor in this fast moving platformer. The opening jungle, top left, has plenty of problems to baffle beginners.

brings back your memory – just like that! Loss of amnesia has its price, however. Not only do you remember that the world is under threat from hostile aliens, it also dawns that they know you know their secrets – and they want you eliminated.

And so you start your quest to get back to Earth. Puzzles increase in frequency and cleverness the further you get, but in truth gameplay follows traditional platformer problems of negotiating your surroundings. Many sections will have to be repeated over and over again until you've perfected the intricate combination of moves to make within a particular set of conditions. Frustration inevitably rises to the point of apoplexy. This isn't helped by the fact that the realistic controls only accentuate any tiny, but 'deadly' errors in the way your character has been programmed. When Conrad jumps down from one platform to another, for example, he doesn't crouch but instead stands vulnerable and upright for a second before you can re-direct him. Should a mutant be waiting for him below – well... it's either one shield point gone, or Return To Go.

That *Flashback* is built up around being able to use the sprite correctly doesn't mean that once mastered,



Getting trapped by baddies and remote controlled weapons, above, demands instinctive use of the control system, crouching and squeezing off shots quickly. Later levels, left, feature huge chasms to negotiate, but clean up any sharp shooters before the jumping.



enjoyment disappears. The programmers continually throw in complications in the form of power-ups, the most notable of which is a force field, given to you when you enter New Washington. While it's exceptionally useful when you want to climb up onto a platform occupied by a gun-toting alien, it also means that, effectively, you've been given the complications of a 14th move...

If you haven't yet played *Flasback* on any system before, it's still a very impressive title, particularly on 3DO. It has few modern day peers that can match its ability to hook the player like a guppy, while the in-game graphics remain attractive and involving. The lack of notably whizzy effects is more than compensated for by pure style whilst aurally, the game's a masterpiece with an involving soundfield of effects that varies for each level. My only reservation is that if you've played the game before, all the slick enhancements are only cosmetic and aren't enough by themselves enough to warrant purchasing it a second time – unless you just happen to want to own a classic slice of the videogame history pie. Recommended. □ dw

3DO Magazine rating: ★★

Slam 'n' Jam '95

Publisher: Crystal Dynamics © 0171 9730011 **Developer:** Left Field Productions **Save Game:** 3 SRAM slots **Price:** £44.99 **Available:** Now

After the massive 16bit success of NBA Jam and its Tournament follow-up, the marginal appeal of basketball seems finally about to change. At first glance, Slam could well be the game to do for basketball what Kylie Minogue did for Australian soap stars.

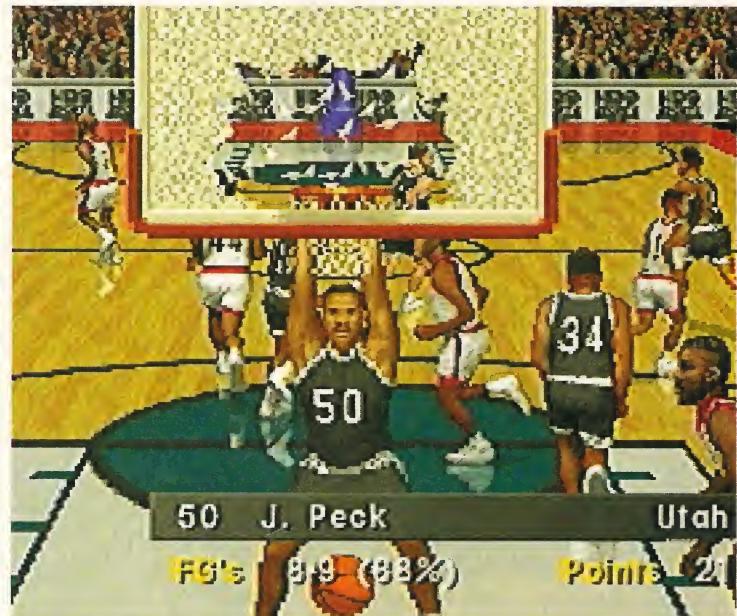
Firstly, an admission. At school, I was such an embarrassment to the male sex at football ("Don't run from it, run to it!") that I was banished to the girls' sports area to play netball every Thursday afternoon. The humiliation was deep (I didn't look good in a Left Wing bib) and the psychological damage lasting, but I found out that netball, the cissified sister of basketball, was a truly intense sporting experience. The five-on-five team-play means there's no room for a weak link or shirker, everyone's got to find space, make a shot, get back to goal, steal and get back attacking every minute of the game, making the sport indisputably more fast paced than English football. Any cynics put off by the all the typically American hype should wise up, the phenomenal pace of this sport makes it ideal for a videogame.

Crystal Dynamics certainly make it easy to get pulled in, presenting the game in a fashion that absolutely demands attention. The players themselves frequently scale up to about half the height of the screen, each sprite so detailed that you can recognise each one individually by their differing hairstyles, expressions and height. The 'behind the hoop' perspective lets you admire them storming towards you, smoothly thundering into the foreground, until one scores and his jubilant face grins maniacally at you. These are outstanding game graphics and, even more amazingly, they don't slowdown, flicker or distort in any way. They just do exactly what you tell them, with the odd, unexpected flourish to punctuate a particularly stylish move or goal. The realistic animation is partially due to rotoscoping of real basketball players, but rather than leave it at that the designers have added in comic touches and slight exaggerations to make them seem more than real. The graphics also help with game-

play – with just five players per side spotting a tiring player is crucial. With these humongous graphics, you soon spot which individual is not pulling his weight. Swift substitutions maintain your attacking edge and keep the team working together.

This being Crystal Dynamics, the psychotic attention to detail extends from the players to every other facet of the game. The shiny wooden court reflects the players feet while the crowd, rather than being an abstract mire of colour, feature hundreds of individually animated spectators, who jump to their feet and roar behind continuously rotating courtside ads.

The soundtrack of squeaky sneakers and roaring crowd is impressive enough, but the icing on the sonic cake is provided by CNN's Van Earl Wright. A huge range of soundbites have been skilfully coded into the game to provide a near-constant running commentary. His enjoyably over-excited blatherings really add to the satisfaction of pulling off a long shot or making a successful steal – it all adds up to making *Slam 'n' Jam* as complete an experience as you could wish. With a mountain of game options, including match length, fatigue levels, switch end on or off, as well as match length and commentary on/off (keep it on) this is even



Slam the ball in the basket with enough energy and you get the sublime satisfaction of smashing the net support! Your player will hang there for a while, too, beaming at you with undiluted pride as your team jog back into defence.

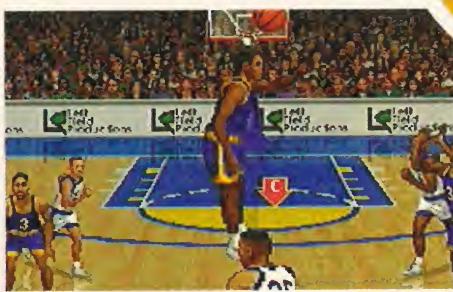
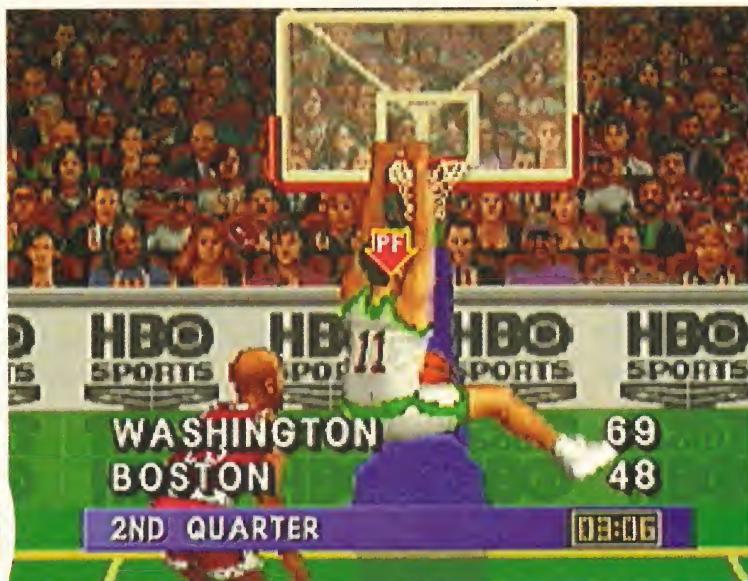
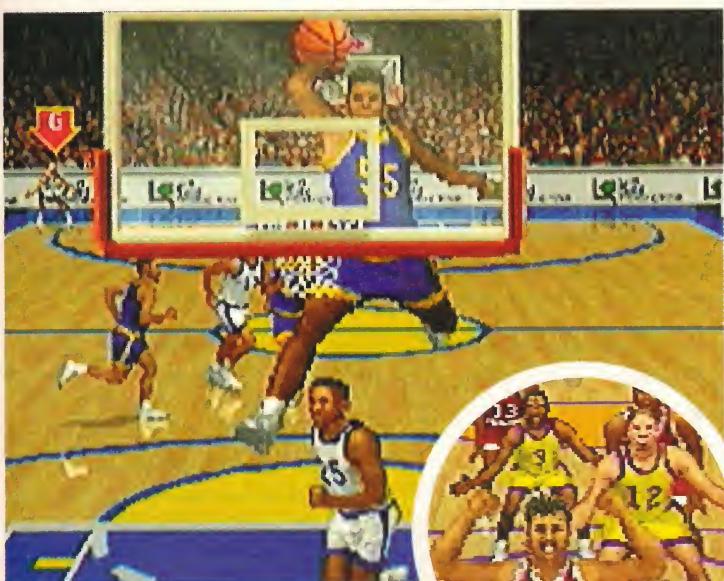
more polished and exciting than EA's best sports sims.

Thankfully, having engineered such a superbly presented game, Crystal deliver the killer blow by ensuring the underlying game engine actually lives up to its looks. Passing and shooting is instinctive and enjoyable, switching between just five players is easy and responsive, whilst more difficult moves – such as stealing and blocking – take considerable practice to pull off successfully. Despite all the audiovisual trickery, you never once feel out of control or behind the action – everything and everyone moves and responds as fast as you could want.

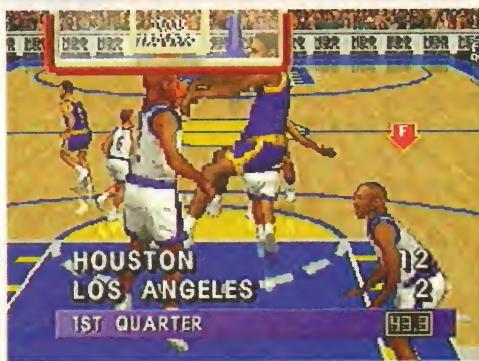
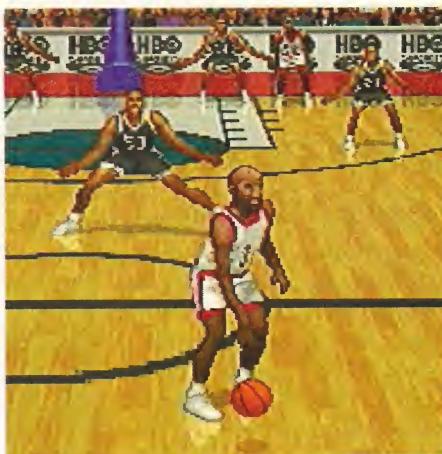
Of course, the comparison everyone wants to hear is between *Slam 'N' Jam* and Acclaim's mega-hit *NBA Jam*. I loved the latter on SNES, the hyper exaggerated slam dunks and arcade-speed making for a real adrenaline rush. While *Slam 'N' Jam* clearly overwhelms it in presentation term, its main edge is the considerably

Highly
3DO
Magazine
Recommended

3DO
Magazine
Recommended



Another glorious basket, and a chance to admire the atmospherically designed audience. Far left, above, a more extravagant couple of points, the camera zooming into the scorer as he slams the ball in. Below, practicing a few dribbling skills.



more realistic, in-depth gameplay. At heart it's a sim, not an arcade game, which actively rewards dedicated play and experimentation with ever more lethal skills.

To the uninitiated, *Slam 'n' Jam* can seem almost banal at first. Like any other basketball sim, each team appears to take turns to score, with totals regularly topping the hundred mark. The key is to get into a rhythm, keeping the scores level, then steal or make a break to throw your opponent out. If they can't break back, they'll stay three or four points behind, and the pressure is unbearable. The leading team must keep the rhythm constant, whilst the losers are under intense tactical pressure to make a break. If they try and catch up with a wild, long distance shot they risk missing their regular, close-in two points for an easy goal and slipping further behind.

Stealing is difficult, as is preventing blocking goals without accidentally foulng (and giving away penalty

shots), so for beginners, at least, the emphasis is on methodical, back and forth scoring, praying for a break.

In short, *Slam 'n' Jam* plays like a dream, as addictive in one-player mode as two. Exhibition matches are tough enough, but the tournament itself is an even more daunting challenge. Obviously the grandiose graphics provide a big attention grabber, as does the exhilarating soundtrack, but ultimately it's the gameplay that pulls you deep. Once you get to grips with the principles of the game, and when you start developing original tactics and, more importantly, enjoying success from them, *Slam 'n' Jam* takes a life-threatening hold on you. With such astonishing presentation and huge, beefy characters at last everyone can appreciate the pace of this amazing game. Simply outstanding. □ mcw

3DO Magazine rating: ★★★★



System Codes

Essential 3DO software made easy, because we're good like that

ANOTHER WORLD

To access a hidden level on this stylish platform puzzler, enter BRGR on the password screen, then press A to proceed.



PASSWORDS

STAGE 1: LDKD	STAGE 8: KLFB
STAGE 2: HTDC	STAGE 9: DDRX
STAGE 3: CLLD	STAGE 10: HRTB
STAGE 4: LBKG	STAGE 11: BRTD
STAGE 5: XDDJ	STAGE 12: TFBB
STAGE 6: FXLC	STAGE 13: TXHF
STAGE 7: KRFK	STAGE 14: CXJL
	STAGE 15: LFCK

BURNING SOLDIER

To access the Debug menu you'll need two controllers. At the main screen access Option mode. Once in press L,R,C,X and Right on controller 2 simultaneously. A new menu should then appear, entitled "Debug Information/BS". It has five main options.

1. ENEMY MISSILE. Enemies won't shoot at you.
2. ALWAYS BOSS CLEAR. Defeat the end-of-level boss without even having to shoot.
3. DATA STREAM JUMP. Allows you to jump levels by using L and R.
4. AREA SELECT: Allows you to start at any one of the game's four playing areas.
5. FOUR PLAYER MODE. Allows four people to play. Need four pads!

DEMOLITION MAN

You've had them on Easy. The following codes, sent in by Tim Wardle and K. Fielding allow you to access every level in



Stuck on a particular game, can't get past that particularly gargantuan end-level guardian? Well fret no more. Back, as promised, are 3DO Magazine's authoritative System Codes.

Demolition Man on the Hard setting.

THE FORTRESS:

GT7PH2C6K, GY5NGJH8R, C9PNMX-CXN, ZTFDHVHZ\$, ZRP6H\$QPV, 8P76H\$LTD

THE MUSEUM:

LQWLH3GBC, QW6NC2BH3, K16612L4P

THE TUNNELS:

RRSPH2V&J, 394DRTGY\$

AUTO PURSUIT:

G\$TRH\$G17, FH1N12TNP

CRYOPRISON HALLS:

G5T59\$KQ&, GL2PKZKCK, GL1P3ZFG5

Note: Map out the tunnels on the easy level as they're exactly the same on the hardest setting. This makes it easier to run-like-hell when you progress past the first level.



THE HORDE

To access *The Horde*'s built-in cheats you need to know how to spell words using the joypad. There are six letters in total - U (Up on the D-Pad), D (Down), L (Left), R (Right), O (Button A) and T (Button B). To enter words start the game. Press Up, hold down A and B and Pause the game. While Paused spell one of the following words :

DOLDOOR: Finish the current habitat and return to the castle

LOOTLORD: 30,000 Crowns for free

LOUDTOOT: Reveals the entire map

ODDROD: Allows you to continue even if your village is no more

TROLLDROOL: Allows you to buy all objects at the shop

TROT: Run twice as fast

TURDODOR: Invulnerability

JAMMIT

Enter BBSKNR at the password screen to play the Boss round on this technically poor but damned addictive ghetto game.

REBEL ASSAULT

The following codes were also sent in by Tim Wardle. They allow you to access every level in *Rebel Assault* in either Normal or Hard mode, for non-Jedi Knights only.



NORMAL: BOTHAN, HERGLIN, LEENI,

THRAWN, LWYLL, MAZZIC, JULPA, MORRT, MUFTAK, RASKAR, JHOFF, ITHOR, UMWAK, ORLOK, NULLON

HARD: BORDOK, SKYNX, DEFEL,

JEDGAR, MADINE, TARKIN, MOTHMA, GLAYYD, OTTEGA, RISH II, IZRINA, KAR-RDE, VONZEL, OSSUS, MALANI

SOCcer KID



Change the Kid's colours by pressing Up and Down and Left and Right at the title screen on this enjoyable but pretty tricky platformer.

STELLAR 7

To gain INFINITE ENERGY and POWER UPS enter the following at the main menu with controller one:

L, R, R, L, R, L, L, L, L, L, L, L, R, L, L,

L, L, L, L, R, L, L, L, L, R.

The Stellar 7 logo should change to Wimpy 7. Use the L and R buttons now to replace energy and gain power-ups.

SUPER WING COMMANDER



To access the Debug menu go to the lounge, press and hold down X and then press B, B, C, C, A, A, A. A sound informs you of your success. The most interesting new option is the System Flags one. Set KILLABLE to False and you can't die. Set BANGABLE to False and you won't be able to collide with anyone else. Set FINGER OF DEATH to True and, in-game, you can destroy any targeted enemy by pressing L, R and B at the same time. Fail to have something targeted and you'll destroy everyone, including your Wingmen, in the area immediately around you. Finally set PICKER ACCESS to True, return to the lounge, cycle through the Options until you hear Choose Campaign or Choose Mission. You'll then be able to select every possible mission.

WAY OF THE WARRIOR

Play a VERSUS mode match with High Abbot against Kull in the Throne Room. Allow High Abbot to win and then rematch. The game goes very weird...

If you have any solutions, tips or cheats, send them to:

3DO Magazine, Paragon Publishing, Paragon House, St. Peter's Road, Bournemouth BH1 2JS. □

3DO Magazine

Star Control II

Part two of our exclusive play guide from Crystal Dynamics...

ESSENTIAL OBJECTIVES

When you start, you go into the Solar System (Sol).

- Go to Mercury or Jupiter-B to get some radioactive elements.
- Go to Pluto to greet the Spathi ship. Get him to join you if you wish.
- Go to Earth and get yourself some fuel.
- Go to Epsilon Gruis (241; 368) (Spathiwa) and convince the Spathi to join you.
- Wait until they encase themselves in a red shield. Go do something else.
- Go to Spathiwa and get the Umgha Castor.
- Go to Beta Copernicus I (600.8;263.1) and get the egg case.
- Talk with Mycon and get them to talk about the 'Deep Children'. You might have to go to Epsilon Scorpii (629.1;220.8).
- Go to Beetleguese (412;377) (Syreen) and talk until they tell you to go and get their penetrator ships behind a door.
- Go to Epsilon Camelopardalis I-A (593.7;393.7) (Ur-Quan) and investigate the door. They will tell you to go to Beetleguese.
- Go to Beetleguese until Talana tells you to go to Mycons and tell them about Organon.
- While the Mycons are away, go to Beta Brahe (639.5;231.2) and get the Sun Device.
- Go to Krueger I (52;52) (Pkunk) to get the Clear Spindle.
- Go to the area of Delta Draconis (253.5;835.8) (Thraddash) and convince them to join you: i.e keep on attacking, but don't let them attack the Kohr-Ah.



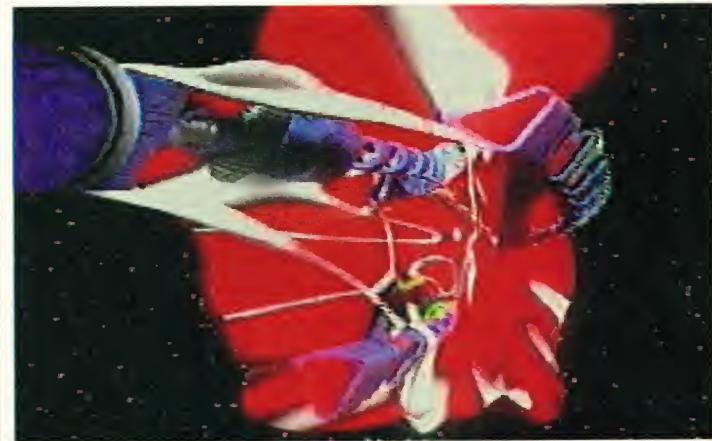
Star Control II
Published By: Crystal Dynamics
© 0171 9730011
Price: £39.99

- Go to Zeta Persei I (946.9;280.6) (Druuge) and trade the Rosy Red Sphere with the Mycon egg case.
- Go to the area of Beta Librae (Supox) and get the broken Ultron. Use the Clear Spindle, Aqua Helix and Rosy Red Sphere to fix the Ultron.
- This section was devised so that you can now go to Zeta Hyades VI-B (850.0;937.2) and get the bomb.
- Go to Ilwrath Homeworld Alpha Tauri (229;366.6). Use the Umgha Castor. Make the Ilwrath attack the Thraddash.
- Go to Eta Vulpeculae II (353.7;256.6) (Orz) to get an alliance.
- Go to Delta Vulpeculae II-C to get the Taalo Device.
- Go to Alpha Pavonis VII (56.2;800) and investigate the Ur-Quan crash site.
- Go to the Quasi-Portal (36.8;633.2) and wait for the Quasi-Space Portal (bright star-like object on the Starmap, green hole on the Hyperspace screen. Comes around the 17th of each month for sure, and other times).
- Go to the outer star and meet the Ariloulaleelay. Get the Portal Spawner. Talk about the Talking Pet. Go again to get reward. **All of the previous sections could be done in any order. This only takes you through the essentials. It does not introduce you to the Yehat (Gama Serpentis I), Shofixti, Delta Gorno (290.8;26.9), the Vux or Alpha Cerenkov (422.4;198.6). (The Vux and Shofixti send you on a mission to find Shofixti maidens for purposes of reproduction (Delta Lyncis I (570.4;979.5)).**

TO FINISH THE GAME

- Go to Procyon II and use the Sun Device. You free the Chmmr and they tell you what you need to do to finish the game. They also give you unlimited RU (resource units).
- You are transported back down to

For those of you still struggling with Crystal Dynamics' Star Control II after last month's wonderful guide thank your lucky, lucky stars for this full, easy-peasy, walk through solution.



Earth. Buy lots of good ships and prepare for the final battle against the Sa-Matra.

- Go to Delta Craterius V (620.0;593.5), the one with lots of ships surrounding it. When you get in you will see the Ur-Quan battle platform, the Sa-Matra. Before you confront the Sa-Matra, use the Talking Pet.

• Attack the Sa-Matra. (You might want to save so you can play this part again and again).

Throughout the game, you will need to do the following:-

- Get money! You can't buy vital fuel unless you have it. You get money by blowing up ships or mining minerals and bringing them back to Earth.
- Save the Zoq-Fot-Pik (homeworld Alpha Tucanae (400;543.7)) from the Ur-Quan and Kohr-Ah forces.
- Find the Melnorme and trade with them. You can get biological data by killing life on planets and moons.

OTHER THINGS...

- Rejuvenating the Shofixti race. Make a deal with Admiral Zex on Alpha

Cerenkov (422.1;198.6) and bring the Beast from Delta Lyncis I (570.4;979.5). After Zex is killed by the Beast, go down to the planet and get the Shofixti women. Then give the women to Tanaka at Delta Gorno (290.8;026.9). Give him a few months and you'll have more allies than you'll know what to do with!

• Start a revolution in the Yehat Empire. After you help replenish the Shofixti, make sure you have one Shofixti ship in your fleet. Go to the Yehat space and speak with a Yehat. Tell him about the Shofixti being back, and the following political repercussions will start a revolt in their empire. Why? Wait 'till the end...

- Find all ten of the Rainbow Planets, and discern their message:-
**Beta Pegasei I (39.5;745.8)
Epsilon Draconis I (283.6;785.7)
Epsilon Lipi I (543.7;827.0)
Beta Leporis I (766.6;866.6)
Gamma Aquari I (853.4;879.7)
Groombridge I (996.0; 904.2)
Alpha Andromedae I (862.5;700.0)
Gamma Reticuli I (741.6;508.3)
Gamma Kepler I (602.0;297.9)
Zeta Sextantis I (468.1;91.6)**
(They appear brownish on the star system screen). □ cd/dw

Alone in the Dark

Our walk through guide to this Infogrames classic

THE ATTIC

1. Push the large cabinet in front of the window, and the trunk over the trapdoor as soon as you are able. Move with speed as after 15 seconds or so one Zombie will attempt to come through the window, and, a moment after, another through the trapdoor.

2. In the cabinet you'll find an Old Indian Cover. Open the trunk and take the Rifle. Search the bookcase and you'll find a Book. Search behind the back of the piano and you'll find a Letter. Finally, take the Oil Lamp from the green table.

3. Go through the door and down the stairs. Here you'll find a Bow leaning against some shelves, and an Oil Can on the shelves. Go through the door in front of you.

4. Go through the first door on your left. Search the desk to find the Key. Use the Key on the chest and take the Sabre. Don't use it yet.

5. A Zombie is waiting for you just outside the door and will come at you as soon as the door opens. Back up and practise the art of kicking the creature just before it has time to strike.

6. Walk through into the hall and enter the room facing you. There is nothing of interest here, except a side door. Go through it.

7. In the bedroom go to the side of the



bed and take the Vase. As soon as you've done so a cut sequence shows a monster at the window. It will crash through and attack you. Time your kicks carefully and you should be able to get through unscathed.

8. Throw the Vase to find a Key. Use the

This has had more desperate calls to the 3DO office than any other, most people being stuck at the first problem downstairs. Well, we've had enough, so here's the full, walk-through solution to this atmospheric adventure so that you won't be alone anymore...

Key on the dresser with the Teddy on top. Take the Small Mirrors from inside the dresser and go into the corridor and into the bathroom.

9. Open the cabinet and take the First Aid Case. Open the Case to find a Flask. Drink it when your energy runs low. Go through the door at the end of the hallway and onto the balcony.

10. To get past the two purple Gargoyles place one small mirror on the table on the left, and the other on the right...

SECOND FLOOR

1. Go down the stairs. You won't be able to get into the library just yet so walk around the suit of armour (get too close and it attacks you) and through the closed door leading into a room with a fireplace.

2. In the room you'll see a ghost sitting on a chair. Be careful not to get too close – mortal weapons can't harm it. In the Cabinet you'll find a box of Cartridges. Use them to load your Rifle. Walk around the chair and take the Gramophone as you go. Search the left side of the fireplace for the Matchbox and Poker. Go through the door into the narrow corridor.

3. Go through the second door in the corridor. Avoid the creature in the bath (it can't be killed) by running in once to take the Jug, and a second time to open the cabinet and take the First Aid case.

4. Return to the hallway. Go into the dark room. Use the Oil Can to fill the Oil Lamp, and then use the Match Box to light it. Put the Oil Lamp down onto the floor. Walk around until you find a Very Heavy Statuette and a Book. Search the small table next to the bed to find some Bullets.

Continue down the hallway until you come to the picture gallery. Walk in front

of The Frontiersman and use the Indian Cover on it. Return to the main hallway and stand in front of the suit of armour (but not too close!). Throw the Statuette to knock it over. Take the Sword...

5. Return to the narrow corri-

dor and go through the first door into a room with a notebook on the mantle of a fireplace. A monster will attack you as soon as you take it so get your rifle or sword ready. Walk out of the corridor and down the stairs onto the ground floor.



search him to find Arrows. Walk backwards through the door – the spiders won't follow.

5. Open the door to the kitchen. Search the storeroom near the kitchen door to find a Key and a Biscuit Box (eat the Biscuits when you're low on health). Return to the kitchen.

6. Open the door near the window and walk into the coal room. A Zombie will attack you from behind. Kill it with your sword. Take the Oil Can, stand next to the Water Barrel and use the jug to fill it up. Search the pile of clothes to find a Box of Shoes. Open the box and find the Revolver.

7. Return to the kitchen and take the Pot Of Soup. Open the door into the hallway, go through the opposite door into the dining room. Put the Pot Of Soup on the far end of the table and they won't attack you.

8. Open the single door and run to the table in the middle of the room. Use the Water Jug to douse the cigar smoke. Search the bureau, leave the Record and take the Book. Return to the picture gallery.

9. Save the game.
10. Walk into the gallery until you can just make out the Indian Chief. Use the



Alone In The Dark
Published By: Infogrames
© 0171 7388199
Price: £39.99



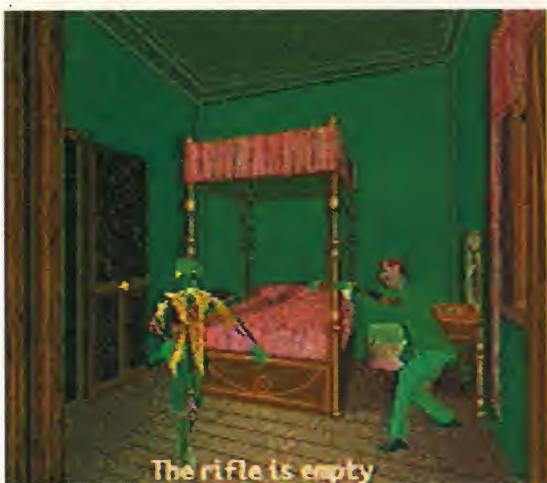
Bow to hit the picture with an arrow. A sound of thunder indicates success. Fail three times and you'll have to load your saved game.

11. Walk to the end of the gallery and enter the room to the right of the painting. Take the Book from the dresser. Push the Clock to find a Safe. Search the Safe and take the Key and Parchment.

12. Walk to the double doors and enter the library. Open the doors with the Key.

13. Save the Game.

14. Use the Oil Lamp and walk into the room. Inside is the Vagabond who is able to pass through solid objects to attack you. Put down the Lamp and run into the corridor on the right hand side. Search



library, to use as little oil as possible.

15. Pick up the Talisman. Take everything except the Yellow Book – especially the dagger with the Yellow Blade. for the shelf that has a mechanism to trigger. Put the False Book into the mechanism to open a secret door. Go through.

16. Return to the smoke room. Use the Key you found to unlock the door. Search the cabinet to find a Record and Book. Stand in front of the Shield and use the Sabre to reveal a secret passage leading down. DON'T GO DOWN. You won't be able to get back, and you haven't got everything you need.

17. Go the ballroom, use the Record you've just found on the Gramophone and watch the dancers start to move. Grab the

key from the mantle and walk out of the room. The dancers will disintegrate.

18. Walk to the stairway near the kitchen and then to the locked door next to the garden. Unlock the door. Take Bullets.

19. Walk to the study and prepare for the final part of the adventure...

UNDER THE HOUSE

1. Run across the bridge and jump before you reach the end. On the other side of the bridge is a red walled tunnel. Arm the rifle or revolver and shoot the monsters waiting for you.

2. Walk down the tunnel 'till you reach the giant worm. Run around it, avoiding the boulder, and keep running until you reach a bird monster. Shoot it and start running again.

3. When you hear the worm making noises ahead of you run back to the boulder which should now be gone, revealing a passageway for you to enter. Enter and turn right into a cavern with a giant pool of water and a wooden bridge. Cross the bridge – fast. Go too slow and the Deep One will get you. Make sure you jump over the off coloured section. At the end of the bridge jump up to the ledge.

4. Save the Game.

5. Prepare a weapon - preferably the sword and kill the monster. Continue to the next ledge which leads to another pool of water with a series of pillars. Kill the flying creature before you try to cross

by moving to the right side of the ledge and striking it with your sword when it comes close. It takes four hits.

6. Jump across the pillars, saving after each jump.

7. On the other side is another red cave. Walk through until the passageway splits. Go right.

8. Follow the right passageway and you'll come to a cavern with several bridges. Walk across the left hand bridge to the corner. Drop down to the next bridge. Jump across the bridge. At the corner turn left and jump over the next section.

Jump up twice, turn around and use the sword to kill the flying creature. Now walk across the bridge and jump over to the chest. Use the key to unlock it and take the gem and the book.

9. Walk behind the chest, push the large rock to reveal a passageway. Go through and drop down to the next corridor. Ignore the alcove mechanism but continue onward into the dark maze. Follow it around the outside until you reach a door and walk through into a cavern with a large tree.

10. Jump into the water and walk toward the tree in a zig zag pattern to avoid the fireballs that shoot in your direction. Try to lure the Deep Ones into the path of the fireballs to kill them off.

11. When you reach the tree take the Hook and use the Talisman on the alter. This stops the fireballs. Use the lighter on the lamp and throw the lamp at the tree. All hell breaks loose, so run to the platform at the side of the cavern and jump up. Use the hook on the stone door and you emerge in the alcove near the entrance to the maze.

12. Go back to the maze and turn North



to the blue stone wall. Use the hook to open it and enter a cave occupied by a white monster. Turn left, cross the bridge and climb to the ledge of the red cave.

13. When you reach the cave head back to where you came in. Just before the tunnel exit is a dark section in the wall. This is a secret passageway to the cellar. Go through and climb up the stairs.

14. Go through the entrance doors... and it's all over. Expect the fantastic sequel at the end of this year. □ dw



Interactive

Please address correspondence to: 3DO Magazine, Paaron Publishing, Paragon House, St. Peter's Road, Bournemouth BH1 2JS or fax us on 01202 299955.

Firstly I must say I am a big fan of your magazine and of 3DO for what they have given us and are trying to achieve. However, like most 3DO owners I have some questions to which I would like answers but everybody seems avoiding. Perhaps you could shed some light once and for all.

Obviously at the moment everyone is raving about PlayStation/Saturn. The 3DO seems to be on borrowed time according to other magazines. Yet it's still the No.1 console here.

1) Can 3DO produce a conversion of *Ridge Racer* as good as PlayStation. It really does make *Need* seem a little slow. 2) 3DO specs seem just as good as the new consoles (twin custom chips etc.). So what gives them the edge over our baby? 3) Why are there so many PC games in the pipeline for 3DO? This isn't too much of a problem except they come out way after the PC version. (It's been living hell waiting for *Wing Commander III* and where was your promised review?). 4) I think we need more arcade games, but how when Sega make the best coin-ops? Where do we go from here? The Saturn really can trouble us if they produce killer conversions.

5) Why are there so few reviews in your mag. In HMV, *Immercenary* and *Quarantine* were available to buy while you're only previewing them. What's going on? It's disappointing to wait another month and a half for reviews you promised but don't deliver (no explanations either).

6) Demo disks are good but you're putting bestsellers on the mag that most people have already bought on the strength of your reviews months before (*Theme Park*). People will think twice before pay £5 for an undersized mag with a demo disk of a game they probably already have.

7) Finally M2, can we really believe (please tell me yes) that a 64bit processor with a few inbuilt tricks can blow us to kingdom come in a year's time? Surely it

needs to arrive with the other consoles to help stop 3DO sales becoming non-existent – especially at Xmas time, remember Sega are the kids' favourite and that Sony machine is getting all the coverage. Isn't it about time Panasonic/3DO started advertising instead of sitting back and letting the others roll through. All because they're a few months off isn't good enough.

I'll stop for now, I'm not moaning, just slightly concerned about my beloved 3DO.

Keep up the good work and come on 3DO, let's kick arse!

John Donoghue, Romford, Essex.

1) Ridge Racer is designed around the PlayStation's polygon engine. While 3DO could emulate it by streaming data off CD as happens with *Need*, why bother? Check our *Ridge Racer vs Need For Speed* feature for our opinion on the two games.

2) The pace of technological advance is massive. Almost anyone building a console a year on from another design will produce something superior. That's why 3DO's operating system approach is so important, allowing the machine to be constantly upgraded with cheap, but exceptionally powerful new hardware. Sony, by contrast, are already planning a whole new PlayStation II, while no-one has a clue what Sega plan to follow on from Saturn.

3) If they're good games, why complain? Okay, *Wing III* is taking an age but since they seem to be improving it...

4) 3DO are currently in negotiations to licence M2 to arcade manufacturers (see below). However, let's not romanticise coin-ops here. In Bournemouth, we've got two arcades, including the UK's first Sega Centre, so we know how much fun *Daytona* is with loads of people in multiplayer mode, but aside from that and the odd beat-'em-up, coin-ops are currently desperately starved of either originality or even good gameplay. Sega's *Wing Wars* and *Star Wars* instantly



Star Wars Arcade, unoriginal and monotonous

spring to mind as particularly dire. In short, I think 3DO can do more for arcades rather than vice versa.

5) Generally speaking, it takes two weeks from us finishing the magazine for it to be printed and distributed to newsagents. Getting games ahead of their official release obviously requires co-operation from the software house. When a game is weak, a software house can often be surprisingly short of pre-release review copies. As for *Immercenary*, we did receive a review copy a day before deadline, but felt that wasn't sufficient time to do it justice. A decision we stand by, especially since after extensive playtesting by our editor, he found much of the game's apparent sophistication to be very superficial and completed the whole thing after just a few days. So while we realise it's very irritating having to wait for a review, we feel it's better to be late than inaccurate.

6) Unfortunately, demos tend to be finished after a game's finished rather than before and, unlike the PC, must go

through the same approval process with

3DO as a normal game. However, we

are trying to improve here.

7) A few tricks! M2 is rather more than that. See the feature on page 17.

What can I say about your magazine that already hasn't been said? I know – how about 100% great value for money. As an ex-owner of the Jaguar, I seem to have found a machine that will match the other two machines, I just can't remember their names but who cares?

Why did they call it the 3DO? Will Electronic Arts release *Desert Strike*, *Urban Strike* and *NHL Hockey*? Will Elite release *Commando*? – do you remember *Commando* from the C64? It was a hit on the C64 all those years ago. Will CDi films work on the 3DO when it's fitted with FMV or will they have their own films on CD?

Well, that's all for now – keep up the good work!

Anthony Ayre, Birmingham.

NHL Hockey is in development for 3DO I, while *Desert Strike* is rumoured to be one of the first M2 products. As for *Commando*, yes we do remember it – Mark's a huge fan and would love a 3DO conversion. After the fiasco of *Virtuso*, we can only pray Elite remember it too and get back to the basics which made them a name to watch. And finally, CDi is compatible with VideoCD disks based on the MPEG 1 system. In Japan and America, Panasonic and GoldStar already have VideoCD compatible upgrades but in the UK it appears the hardware makers will wait until 1996 and M2 to keep costs down.

Thank you for helping me make up my mind on buying a 3DO. It's one hell of a powerful machine which brings me to the M2. It sounds an amazing piece of kit but has me wondering. The 3DO Company are releasing the add-on near the end of '95, early '96 – bang on time when the other super consoles enter the market. Now if what you



Urban Strike from EA's hugely successful copter series should come to M2.

asked RJ Mical about M2 being five times more powerful than the PlayStation is right, then the only real contender will be the Ultra64.

When 3DO was first released in America the first batch of games weren't up to much (although they did show promise) and critics were already calling the machine a flop. Now the 3DO is doing much better than expected with some excellent software. The real point is will the M2 have the software and, most important, the companies' support to really make this the next generation machine.

Now, Electronic Arts have to be the best company on the market. They actually include playability in their games that you can't really grow tired of. John Madden has to rank as my favourite game of all time. Due to its success is there any chance of a sequel?

Andrew Barnes, Bridgend, Wales (unfortunately).

3DO are currently assembling a 'dream team' of developers to make sure its worldbeating hardware has the games to go with the tech specs. Currently there's talk of copying Nintendo's plan for Ultra64, with early games debuting in the arcades. Incidentally, M2 is technically superior to Ultra64 without even mentioning the fact it uses CDs rather than carts. Nevertheless, as with any new machine it'll take time for the machine to build up a big software library – which is yet another reason to be grateful for 3DO I and all the games due for it.

As for EA, is there really any doubt about their utter brilliance? EA's games not only look great, but seem to improve over time giving months of pleasure with the incredible attention to the fine detail of long-term gameplay. As for a Madden sequel, there's no news yet and I'd suspect they'll leave any update until M2 is established.

Iwould like to congratulate you on producing an excellent magazine which is top class. It was issue one of your magazine which persuaded me to buy a 3DO, of which I'm very pleased.



John Madden Football – M2 sequel, please?

The reason I'm writing, however, is to ask if there's any chance of someone redoing MicroProse's *F1 Grand Prix* for 3DO. It was an excellent game on the Amiga. So just think how good it would be on the 3DO with textured mapping and all the other tricks the 3DO is capable of. A game of its type is much needed as I'm fed up with all the other magazines raving about *Ridge Racer* on the PlayStation. It looks good, but it lacks variety and depth with only one track. So we need a racing game that not only looks good, but with plenty of depth and variety in the gameplay. That is why I think *F1GP* would be excellent or something like it on the 3DO. It's a game that would sell very well and blow *Ridge Racer* away.

I would also like to say that I've just bought a copy of EA's *Need For Speed*, which is a very good game but it doesn't have any real sense of speed. You can be going along at 150mph and it doesn't seem any faster than 50mph.

Could you please tell me when *PGA Tour Golf* will be released, as it should be another excellent game from those very clever people at EA.

Thanks again for producing an excellent magazine. The future is looking great for the 3DO world. What with all the great games being released this year, plus the M2 upgrade which should be great if the price is right.

Mr A. Hope, Ashington, Northumberland.

MicroProse have always focused on the PC and this is unlikely to change soon. When the SNES and Mega Drive were popular, the company belatedly entered the console market with some disastrously misjudged titles such as *Strike Eagle* and *Impossible Mission 2025*. Many more were simply cancelled.

Partially, as a result the company got into a very bad state financially and had to be taken over by Spectrum Holobyte, MicroProse's one 3DO release so far is Sid Meier's *CPU Bach*, an innovative edutainment title which, unsurprisingly, failed to top the US charts. Spectrum Holobyte's own 3DO effort, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, is bogged down in its own ambition and has been delayed for well over a year now.

All is not gloom however, as we've seen screenshots of a Japanese F1 racer which could well answer your prayers (see previews). In the meantime get back to *Need For Speed*. We too were sceptical about its prospects after seeing an early version, but are now complete addicts (turn over the page for more *Need Info*).



CPU Bach – sadly overlooked edutainment title

Wow! You guys certainly know how to turn a guy's head. What a great magazine. If it wasn't for you I'd still be playing on my humble Amiga.

So why should I be writing to you. I'm sure you've had enough praise. Well, I'd like to reply to the letter from Stephen Jenkins where he complained about the demo disk from issue one. How can he call it disappointing? If it wasn't for that, I would never have discovered *The Horde*. Also, how can he complain that £4.99 for a magazine and CD is expensive? I would pay that for a magazine I'm going to read from cover to cover than pay £3 for an inferior magazine with one or two 3DO reviews.

Tim Wardle, Shanklin, Isle Of Wight.

We may be small, but we like to think we pack in enough information for many apparently bigger, but more spaciously laid out magazines.

A truly excellent magazine. It really is a breath of fresh air to have a games magazine that looks at the genre with a mature outlook. However one point you might consider changing the way you do the ratings. The present format for doing so is a little vague and open to interpretation. How about doing the score as a percentage and also breaking it down into sub ratings (ie graphics, sound, gameplay, lifespan). This may be an old way, but it is a far more accurate way of playtesting a game.

Anyway less of that. I don't actually own a 3DO yet! But I am quite impressed by it. It seems to have a good future, especially with the M2 Accelerator. Which leads on to some questions I would like you to answer for me.

- 1) Will the M2 accelerator come in two formats, ie a dedicated machine and an add-on for the standard 3DO. If so will they both be as powerful as each other?
- 2) When will the FZ-10 be available in PAL format and will it be cheaper? In fact, will 3DO announce a price drop as £399 is a bit steep, but £299 is cool.
- 3) Origin are doing games for 3DO, admittedly under the EA cause. Will we

then see EA classics such as *System Shock*, *Ultima 8* or even *Bioforge*. (Or will I have to keep my PC? which incidentally should never have been used for games as it's a pain in the ass.)

4) Will we ever get to see the forthcoming *Syndicate 2* of Bullfrog fame. That would be good. First person, *Magic Carpet*-style blaster – a *Doom* killer if ever there was.

5) Finally I was pleased to hear that Renegade were thinking of converting some games. What are the chances of getting an enhanced version of the great *Speedball 2* or the deeply satisfying *Chaos* engine?

Anyway keep up the good work and I wish you continued success.

Dustin Gandley, Gloucester.

PS Please print this letter as it will help me as regards buying a 3DO. CHEERS. Oh, yeah, will *Doom*'s graphics be upgraded for the 3DO!

- 1) M2 will initially be released as an add-on. Although an integrated 3DO I & M2 would seem certain, there's no news as yet about how much it will cost and when it'll be released. The machines will be identical in terms of performance.
- 2) The FZ-10 was launched in May for £399. It may drop in price later in the year, but if you want a 3DO now check out our mail order ads. Plenty of compa-



The gorgeous FZ-10 unit

nies are offering machines for much less than £399 with games included.

3) EA are currently being pretty selective about conversions and we've no news of conversions on the games you mention. *Space Hulk* is on the way though, and looks great.

4) According to Bullfrog, *Syndicate 2* isn't first-person perspective, but will use the same viewpoint as the original only you can rotate 360°. It won't debut until March 1996 at the earliest and a 3DO version has yet to be confirmed.

5) Sadly, Renegade have finally decided not to rework their old classics, instead plumping for a possible conversion of a forthcoming adventure game. Shame.

And finally, yes, 3DO *Doom* will have enhanced graphics, sound and game-play! >

> Without doubt this is one of the hottest topics for debate at the moment. The hype for the PlayStation's debut game has been tremendous and most of you have drooled over the arcade, seen videotape of the PlayStation version and possibly even played it at an import shop. They're very different types of games of course, one being a sophisticated sim and the other an arcade game, but due to popular demand here's our in-depth comparison. Besides playing *Need For Speed* endlessly since its release, we've also extensively played *Ridge Racer* as a coin-op, and on our very own inhouse PlayStation.

RIDGE RACER

GRAPHICS: Inevitably the game isn't quite arcade perfect, both screen resolution and frame update are about half the coin-op. Nevertheless, the size and speed at which the polygons are thrown about really does recreate the arcade look and feel, especially with excellent texture maps right down to logo names. The graphics do glitch a bit visually, while slowdown occurs when more than four cars appear on screen. Also, while an exterior view is offered (unlike the coin-op), the car's handling hasn't been tweaked to make it all that useful.



SOUND: The various sound effects and samples are excellent. The music is poor, but see extras below.

REALISM: The much vaunted polygon handling certainly makes for a very fast ride. The cars' handling is generally impressive, although as in the arcade rather exaggerated for excitement. Travelling sideways at 100mph while still accelerating is fun, but less than convinc-

RIDGE RACER VS NEED FOR SPEED

ing. The game also cheats by confining collision detection to the rear of cars (you can literally drive through them from any other angle), and the kerb. In both cases sophisticated interaction is further minimised by simply having your car bounce off! This flaw is particularly annoying when a competitor car bounces you from behind, causing an unrealistic spin.

PLAYABILITY: From the moment you turn on, the game's sheer speed provides an irresistible hook. Just as in the arcade, it's good fast action fun.

LASTABILITY: While it's always fun to slam it on for a quick blast, longer play sessions become problematic with just one race track. Okay, there are extra sections added on and a 'mirror', reverse race mode to make for a supposed six tracks, but it's all awfully similar. Lasting appeal is also diminished by the competitor cars which always follow the same pre-programmed patterns. When playing on mirror mode, where a single mistake is fatal, the game becomes rather robotic.

EXTRAS: If you win you get a brief replay of your last replay. You can also replace the game CD with your own music CD. Unfortunately, most CDs are mixed too low to be all that audible over the sound FX and it's a trick likely to be unique to RR since, with its single track, it doesn't need to access the CD. Game of Galaxian during loading.

OVERALL: An excellent conversion of a fun, if limited coin-op.

NEED FOR SPEED

GRAPHICS: First, the bad points: NFS clearly lacks the detail of RR's texture maps, its frame rate drops lower and it lacks the fullscreen cockpit view. However, technology isn't everything. While RR suffers with bland and rather blocky vehicles, NFS boasts eight of the world's sexist and most expensive sports cars recreated with lovingly drawn texture maps. The in-cockpit perspective lacks

RR's immediate sense of speed, but is still very effective with oncoming traffic scaling past with more than enough speed. The cockpit view also benefits from superb instrument panels to underline the feel of driving your dream car. Other details include two external views – with the controls properly adjusted. Then there's the

incredible variety of the three huge courses which include masses of great detail, from Daytona-like tunnels to lighthouses, forests, even a buried Statue of Liberty! And last, but far from least, are the most spectacular car crashes ever!

SOUND: Again, the PlayStation is

initially more impressive with CD music and voice samples. However, NFS provides a different and characterful engine noise for each car. I love the way the Diablo's V12 drone drops down into a whir when you take your foot off the gas – a subtle reminder of that huge engine block behind you, all ready to swing



round if you corner too sharp. It also has brilliant samples for crashes and going off road – neither of which are possible on RR. Then there's the sound of cars rushing past, the wail of the police siren and screeching tires. It even has individual gear change samples – the NSX's being particularly slick.

REALISM: Where do you start. This is game is just about perfect, from the way the NSX's turbo kicks in at just the right speed (spinning you out on tight turns if you're not careful) to the way the car dips when you brake. The inertia on the cars is brilliant, allowing the wheels to go in one way while the car goes in another in entirely convincing fashion. The steam even comes from exactly the right places on the superbly animated wheels!

PLAYABILITY: Simply by virtue of being a sim, NFS lacks the immediate adrenaline rush of RR. However it looks, feels and sounds so good, so realistic that anyone with an interest in cars will be immediately and completely hooked.

LASTABILITY: Let's be blunt: a lap in *Ridge Racer* of its single track at its longest is about two minutes. On NFS completing just one of its three courses



Art over science: beautifully drawn texture maps enable NFS to rival and even surpass RR in many ways. NFS is life. RR is simply another videogame.

will take 10-15 minutes. On RR there are six different cars, but while they handle differently they've got zero character. You switch cars merely for which is most effective on a given track. For NFS completing all the tracks is relatively easy and many people have criticised it for that, saying you have to make up your own fun with crashes etc. But that's office fun. Take it home and this is the ideal game to come home to after the office. Just as in real life, you can simply cruise along, unwinding with a dream car propelling you through some stunning landscapes. Then if you feel like a challenge, give your opponent the Diablo and go after best times and bonus cars. Whereas on RR it's always the same, on NFS you may race against just one car, but it's in traffic, with cops, and over huge courses. You can also ram cars off the road and force your opponent into crashes – nipping through a tight gap, and then seeing your rear-view mirror fill with a Diablo spinning into the air is one of my all time best gaming experiences. In short, there's simply no comparison.

EXTRAS: Full stats on each car, complete with FMV footage of them in action with voice-over. You also have fully controllable action replays of an entire stage, its highlights or (in-game) the last few seconds of play. The replays also offer numerous different, selectable perspectives and slow-mo or freeze frame.

OVERALL: NFS is one of the best games I've ever played. It's just the perfect game for home consoles.

CONCLUSION: *Ridge Racer* is an impressive demonstration of PlayStation hardware. But *Need For Speed* is a far superior game – especially for the home. Sony fans will protest RR is just a first release and in time they'll get better games. But by then, 3DO will have M2. □ ssw

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Software Directory

Every official UK release reviewed and rated from the first three issues of 3DO Magazine...

ALONE IN THE DARK

Infogrames, £39.99

The game that made Infogrames' name, *Alone In The Dark* shattered preconceptions about what PC gaming was about when it was released in the winter of 1993. Multiple camera angles, haunting polygon graphics and a Voodoo inspired storyline made it the most intimate and atmospheric adventure of the time. It still looks amazing even now, and is well worth a look – especially if you're a fan of Lovecraft inspired chillers.

issue 1, Rating: ★★★★

ANOTHER WORLD

Interplay, £39.99

Originally an Amiga game, *Another World* was a welcome twist on the platform genre. Using rotoscoped sprites and intimate camera angles it achieved a cinematic gloss for the platform genre – quite an achievement at the 16bit time. The 3DO system's version doesn't tamper with the game's near perfect fundamentals, but adds 256 colours to bring the game up to date.

issue 1, Rating: ★★★

BATTLE CHESS

Krisalis, £39.99

All 3D chessboards, bar none, are fundamentally flawed in that a piece closest to the screen will obscure those pieces behind it. *Battle Chess* doesn't prove to be an exception to the rule, and the visual-candy isn't sweet enough to make the extra squinting that's required worthwhile. To its credit the 32-bit RISC chip of the 3DO system powerhouses a V8 chess engine and the game incorporates a clear and simple 2D board for the more serious player.

issue 1, Rating: ★★

BURNING SOLDIER

Panasonic, £39.99

A distinctly Japanese game, *Burning Soldier* follows where *Microcosm* and *Novastorm* have been before by transposing interactive sprites onto an uninteractive, pre-rendered backdrop. Naturally that makes for a fairly linear adventure, but one also with

in-your-face manga-esque graphics to whet the appetite of any shoot-'em-up fan.

issue 1, Rating: ★★

CANNON FODDER

Virgin, £44.99

Sensible Software's classic in miniature gets the 3DO treatment and comes out with a vibrant new colouring and crystal clear sound effects. As a one player game there are few games that can touch it for its addictive qualities – the desire to complete



all the levels, defeat all your foes, blow up all those buildings takes on a missionary zeal. The absence of a two-player mode, however, allows developers like Silent Software to come in with their similar *Return Fire*, and score significant points.

issue 3, Rating: ★★★★

DEMOLITION MAN

Virgin, £49.99

This is a glorious showcase both for the technical capabilities of the 3DO (great FMV, glorious presentation) and for the sheer clout of videogames to be written in collaboration with the actual making of the movie.

Gameplay isn't as innovative as the lavish front end, however, with lightgun, road racer and *Doom* mini games, none impressive individually but melded together to form a playable package that offers a tough challenge. Passwords side-step tedium, and the whole thing improves vastly with a lightgun. A must for fans of the movie.

issue 2, Rating: ★★★★

DRAGON'S LAIR

Elite, £39.99

More of a cartoon than a game, Sullivan Bluth's arcade classic wows those who watch the game, but frus-

trates those who are actually playing it. Gameplay is restricted to pressing the correct button at exactly the right time. This gets very tedious. The quality graphics – drawn at the Don Bluth studios – really are amazing though, and can be attributed to the game's success.

issue 1, Rating: ★★

ESCAPE FROM MONSTER MANOR

Electronic Arts, £39.99

The 3DO system's answer to iD's *Wolfenstein/Doom* games shows that the 3DO system is more than capable of the first person 3D perspective arcade game currently causing such a sensation on the PC. In fact, *EFMM* shows that the 3DO system, with its ability to create translucent sprites and gorgeous texture maps, is more than a match for its 15 year old counterpart. Unfortunately, what *EFMM* lacks is iD's design skill, and the pure, unadulterated rush of their *Doom* games, as this is rather dull.

issue 1, Rating: ★★

FAMILY FEUD

Gameteck, £39.99

The American inspiration for Family Fortunes, this suffers from culturally specific questions you're unlikely to know the answers to, a slow, scroll and click response interface, poor, minimally animated digitised graphics and a fundamentally uninteresting format for computer game. With games like *Twisted* and *Station Invasion* subverting the gameshow genre and using the 3DO as a multimedia machine, capable of a wide range of game styles, *Family Feud* just looks sad and painfully lazy. One for students of the great dysfunctional nation only.

issue 2, Rating: ★

FIFA INTERNATIONAL SOCCER

Electronic Arts, £44.99

The most stylish and visually impressive soccer game there has ever been, Electronic Arts met the huge pre-release hype with a product unusually more than worthy of the attention. From the superb FMV intro, spiced with in-game action scenes

hardly distinguishable from real-life, to the multitude of camera angles, slow motion controls and sound FX, *FIFA International* is a game that looks good enough to eat. Purists



may argue that gameplay isn't a match for the no frills *Sensible Soccer*, but a six-player game compensates rather well.

issue 1, Rating: ★★★★

GEX

BMG, £46.95

The 3DO's *Sonic or Mario* with bells on, Gex redefines the platform genre in 32bit, postmodern guise. The central Gecko sprite (rendered with over 450 frames of Silicon Graphic animation) allows the hero to defy gravity



and cling to walls; use his tail as a whip and long gelatinous tongue to consume power-ups. However, it's the imposed perspective on the genre that gives Gex its idiosyncratic feel. Sending up US sitcoms, and great and not so great games of the past, Crystal's standard-bearer for the 32-bit generation will appeal to a mature as well as young games-playing audience, making it one 3DO title no one should be without.

issue 3, Rating: ★★★★

GRIDDRERS

The 3DO Company, £39.99

36 levels of tortuous puzzling action, *Gridders* is one of the more unusual games to have made its way onto the 3DO system. The aim of the game is to collect gems, secreted within moving blocks. To get the gems out you have to stop the blocks moving – a

feat far from simple. Most blocks won't stop when you stand in their way, they'll just crush you. *Gridders* is entertaining for a while but the lack of any real catch means that its pleasures are ephemeral – you'll soon want to move onto a game with a little more substance. A reasonable attempt to create the success of a puzzler like *Tetris*, but ultimately flawed.

issue 1, rating: ★★★

HORDE, THE

Crystal Dynamics, £39.99

An inspired idea perfectly translated into binary form, *The Horde* successfully integrates a number of gaming styles into a brilliantly comprehensive



package. The object of the game is simple – protect your village from the Hordlings and so allow it to grow and flourish. Achieving that goal is far from simple, however. You'll have to set your traps in the right place, position your Knights and Archers where they're needed – and run about like a mad thing squishing the vile red beasts with your trusty sword. Entertaining and addictive, this is a concept perfectly realised.

issue 1, Rating: ★★★★★

INCREDIBLE MACHINE, THE

Sierra, £39.99

A big hit on the PC over a year ago, this is compelling collection of puzzle games, which although criminally unenhanced for the 3DO, remains as much fun as it ever was. The key to its success, is the way it provides a wide range of objects along with an eventual outcome which you must achieve through manipulating the objects available. A superb learning curve makes play utterly addictive, and the ability to design and build your own puzzles to fox a friend makes this a highly rewarding package if the premise appeals.

issue 2, Rating: ★★★★

IRON ANGEL OF THE APOCALYPSE**TBA, £TBA**

A bizarre, Japanese *Doom* variant, this really titillates with its fantastic FMV intro sequence, only to implode, sadly, with a poorly programmed, dingy exploration game. There are few aliens to blast, the scenery of the apartment building you're exploring is monotonous, with identical retro-fitted rooms conspiring to confuse your navigation, and, most seriously, the scrolling is slow and jerky, with your mechanoid character barely squeezing through doors and passages with his limp, drab pea-shooter. Persevere and you may get engrossed with the sci-fi drama, but repetitive play will alienate most.

issue 2, Rating: ★★**JAMMIT****BMG, £39.99**

A lazy conversion by GTE of an ancient MegaDrive one-on-one (or two) basketball game, this is uniquely set in a ghetto, with vandalised walls providing the backdrop to the simplistic action. Despite the general ineptitude of the coding and lame animation, this still has some merits in two-player mode, with the simplistic format providing furiously competitive play, and the selection of basketball variants adds some longevity to the action. Hardly essential, but pretty good fun in short bursts.

issue 2, Rating: ★★★**JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL****Electronic Arts, £39.99**

Inarguably the best American Football game on any format ever. EA's masterpiece merges together incredibly detailed, beautifully animated sprites, with stereo sound, FMV and gameplay made in heaven.



John Madden Football also comes with a plethora of options allowing the complete beginner and football pro alike the perfect level of competition. Brilliant in one player mode, unmissable in two.

issue 1, Rating: ★★★★**LOST FILES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, THE****Electronic Arts, £39.99**

The *Lost Files Of Sherlock Holmes* was one of the first 'multimedia' releases to appear on the PC, its tag of multimedia was acquired simply by virtue of the FMV sections which would pop up in a small window were you to talk to someone, or an event was triggered. The FMV will fail to inspire most, now, leaving the gameplay which is far too linear to provide long-lasting appeal.

issue 1, Rating: ★★**MEGARACE****Mindscape, £39.99**

Developed by French software house, Cryo, *MegaRace* was initially developed for the PC before being updated and upgraded for the 3DO system. Using pre-rendered backdrops the scenery is naturally stunning, and the foreground sprites (the cars) surprisingly realistic. Unfortunately, *MegaRace* suffers from the same affliction that all pre-rendered games do – shallowness of gameplay. It's all too simplistic and repetitive.

issue 1, Rating: ★★★**MYST****TBA, £TBA**

A huge hit on the PC the near photo-realistic imagery generated an alarmingly convincing alternate world built up with IQ-like puzzles and an alarmingly intricate and complex storyline. The 3DO version loses the resolution of a PC allows which, in turn, makes some clues extra difficult to discover. The transfer of control to the joypad is also markedly less intuitive, and makes play occasionally frustrating. Still a brilliant adventure, but not the perfect multimedia piece it was on the PC.

issue 3, Rating: ★★★★**NEED FOR SPEED, THE****Electronic Arts, £44.99**

Screenshots don't do *The Need For Speed* justice for the simple reason that it's not the motionless car sprites that are impressive, but the clever mathematics that govern them. Perhaps for the first time ever in the console world the player is provided with vehicles whose momentum feels eerily real – a fact that makes the crashes so visually authentic and spectacular. There are eight super-



cars to race (and trash) including the Porsche 911, Ferrari Testarossa, Dodge Viper and the Honda NSX, plus any of these cars as your race opponent. Driving has never, ever been so fun.

issue 1, Rating: ★★★★**NIGHT TRAP****Virgin, £39.99**

Oh dear. Originally developed for the MegaCD, *Nighttrap* is a sad little exploitation title that goes for the adolescent audience by offering the player the chance to view semi-clad gilfies running about a besieged house. The FMV is of a high standard – much better than the acting – and presentation is very slick, but this is

killer blow is the relative lack of involvement. Our rating says it all.

issue 1, Rating: ★**OFF-WORLD INTERCEPTOR****Crystal Dynamics, £39.99**

Off World Interceptor is one of those games that couldn't be done on any other machine, relying on the 3DO system's twin custom engine to generate its glorious backdrops in real



time. The graphic engine is, in fact, a variant of the *Total Eclipse* one, only this time it's been used to build a racing game – with a difference.

Winning here doesn't mean getting past the finishing line first, but destroying your enemy before he/she destroys you. With lasers, missiles, bombs, etc. at your disposal there's going to be explosions aplenty. Okay in one-player mode (lack of a save game is frustrating), great in two.

issue 1, Rating: ★★★★**OPERATION JUMPGATE****Electronic Arts, £29.99**

A five mission expansion disc to *Shock Wave*, this adds much more strategy, tougher missions and vastly improved graphics to the rather shallow original, providing a much meatier game to get involved with. The gorgeous introduction sequence is a masterpiece, and adds immensely to the atmosphere, which is tangibly tense as increasingly evasive opponents swirl around your manoeuvrable craft. After the rather disappointing *Shock Wave*, this arouses enough enthusiasm to welcome a sequel or another expansion disc, especially if it improves at the same rate of acceleration.

issue 2, Rating: ★★★**PATAANK****Crystal Dynamics, £39.99**

Instead of the conventional top down view of the pinball table, *P.F. Magic* actually places the camera behind the pinball. Stick with it and the game begins to make some sort of (weird) sense. Instead of having flippers your 'craft' has a supply of velocity which you must use to guide it around, hitting power-ups and bonuses as you go. Odd, but strangely enjoyable, it's certainly an acquired taste.

issue 1, Rating: ★★★**POWERS KINGDOM****Panasonic, £39.99**

A very Japanese RPG which boasts some impressively cinematic effects. There's plenty of combat and it's quite addictive, however over the long term it does suffer from repeti-

tiveness. Not exciting enough to please arcade buffs, and not sophisticated enough to woo RPG addicts, this is an interesting failure.

issue 1, Rating: ★★★**REAL PINBALL****Panasonic, £39.99**

More conventional than *Pataank*, *Real Pinball* dispenses with the top-down view of a pinball table, opting instead for the more realistic foreshortened view. Unfortunately, the poorly defined graphics make everything in the distance almost impossible to see. *Real Pinball* is also poorly programmed with the ball moving as though it's surrounded by treacle. Not one of the best games the 3DO system has to offer.

issue 1, Rating: ★**REBEL ASSAULT****Electronic Arts, £44.99**

A CD-ROM extravaganza on PC, this demanded the highest quality encoding available to distract from the limited gameplay, but, remarkably, this rush release on 3DO is poorly implemented, with spooled backgrounds frequently breaking up, destroying the atmosphere and polish that are so essential to this weak title. This is very disappointing, especially as the much superior, radically improved (cosmetically) Mac version is on view to highlight the inadequacy of the 3DO adaptation. Star Wars fans will endeavour to soak up the atmosphere and battle through the odd, reasonably enjoyable sections, but the ineptitude of this release is disheartening from the likes of EA and LucasArts.

issue 2, Rating: ★★★**RETURN FIRE****The 3DO Company, £49.99**

Silent Software have been meaning to develop this labour of love for ages now, and it's arrived just in time to provide the 3DO with one of the very best two-player games around. The scenario is simple – use your four war machines to investigate



each others territory and claim their flag – and predictably, this makes for an engrossing war game that combines elements of *Cannon Fodder* with extraordinary graphics (the 3D zooming and scrolling is stunning) and much meatier action. The polish and playability make this an absorbing solo play as well, with loads of islands to explore and blast your way through, enjoying the versatility of your tank, APV, helicopter and jeep, each of which offer unique gameplay styles and strategical variations. A

superb technical achievement married with timeless game design, *Return Fire* is a must for any software collection.

issue 2, Rating: ★★★★**RISE OF THE ROBOTS****Art Data Interactive, £44.99**

Rise Of The Robots was in development for so long that many began to doubt that it would ever arrive. Arrive it did, however, and immediately confounded the sceptics with its glorious graphics and okay-ish gameplay. *Rise Of The Robots* may be no match for *SuperStreet Fighter* in respect of its combat engine (you can't even jump over your opponent!), but its visuals are truly next generation stuff – if you're shallow enough to care about such things...

issue 1, Rating : ★★★★**ROAD RASH****Electronic Arts, £44.99**

Another game that could only be done on the 3DO system, EA's *Road Rash* is a glorious insight into things to come. Marrying arcade-style instant addiction with home computer



style depth it's also, arguably, the best game released on the 3DO system to date. With over five different types of terrain, a sound track including the likes of *Therapy?* and *SoundGarden*, increasingly powerful motorbikes and brilliant FMV this is a 'must have' game.

issue 1, Rating: ★★★★**SEWER SHARK****Virgin, £39.99**

With *Blade Runner*'s FX whiz John Dykstra responsible for directing the game, the cinematic experience of Digital Pictures behind him, *Sewer Shark* was always going to be an FMV-heavy product with a distinctly movie-style look and feel. The gameplay, though limited, isn't actually all that bad with fast, frenetic shoot-'em-up action, but it's just a shame about the cheesy, all-American dialogue and the limitations of a game engine overshadowed by products like *Shock Wave*.

issue 1, Rating: ★★**SHANGHAI TRIPLE THREAT****Activision, £39.99**

Activision have enjoyed considerable success with their previous console *Shanghai* titles, due both to the ingenious, simplicity of play itself (match tiles as quickly as possible to clear the table) and the delightful bonus of simultaneous two-player games to up the ante. The lack of enhancements on 3DO is forgivable, given the >

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> difficulty of tampering with classic game formats, and the game variations make this a good package.
issue 2, Rating: ★★★

SHOCK WAVE

Electronic Arts, £39.99

Although this features some of the most impressive presentation around (the end-of-the-world-is-nigh scenario is superbly realised), gameplay is rather lacklustre, with simple objectives and overly long, repetitive missions. Few would deny the technical accomplishment achieved, though, and the newly launched data disc, *Operation JumpGate*, certainly provides a much more challenging and enjoyable game. Well worth a look for genre fans.

issue 1, Rating: ★★★

SAMURAI SHODOWN

Crystal Dynamics, £39.99

Samurai Showdown is widely regarded as the best beat-'em-up available on the saturated Neo Geo market. Huge, colourful, brilliantly animated sprites, richly detailed



backdrops and twelve very different characters to choose from make the game an immensely rewarding experience. It may not be quite as fast as *SSFII X*, nor quite so sophisticated, but its bold characters, colours and wide variety of locations put this neck and neck with its better known peer.

issue 1, Rating: ★★★★

SLAYER

SSI/Lion Entertainment, £39.99

Well known on the PC for their *Ravenloft* series, SSI looks set to make a respectable name for themselves on the 3DO system too. *Slayer* uses a graphic engine similar to that in *Doom*, giving the player a first person perspective to view the action around him. It feels slightly more arcade than most computer based RPGs – there is, for example, an emphasis on combat – yet there's enough that's typical of the genre to satisfy even traditionalists. A welcome addition to the 3DO system's increasingly diverse back catalogue.

issue 1, Rating: ★★★★

SOCER KID

Krisalis, £39.99

Soccer Kid is one of the better platform games to have been released into the console world over the last year. One of the main reasons for this is that the eponymous hero is able to do more than just run and jump, but also use his ball to cannon opponents, jump to high up places and so reach otherwise inaccessible

areas. These skills allow for more sophisticated gameplay and varied scenarios – which has to be a good thing in this the most tired genre of them all. Great fun.
issue 1, Rating: ★★★

STARBLADE

Panasonic, £49.99

The enormous impact *StarBlade* had at the arcades upon release has, to Namco's credit, been replicated on a smaller scale for its 3DO release, the simply stunning spooled graphics (original polygons or texture mapped) and brilliantly designed enemy craft making *StarBlade* a quite spectacular experience, especially on a huge TV. *StarBlade* has foreground action that blends seamlessly into the eye-popping backgrounds, that compensates for the repetitive nature of play. It's tough, as well, and whilst interest may pall after completion, few will be underawed by this unreal experience.

issue 2, Rating: ★★★★

STAR CONTROL II

Crystal Dynamics, £39.99

Star Control was originally released far before my time in the ascetic days of 8-bit games and its conversion to the 3DO does little to enhance the geriatric look. Sprites are blobby, backgrounds near non-existent – yet that doesn't matter too much. This game is all about gameplay. One player mode is good, the two-player shoot-'em-up action plain fantastic. Once you've popped you just won't be able to stop.

issue 1, Rating: ★★★★

STATION INVASION

The 3DO Company, TBA

Expanding on the successful styles developed in the brilliant *Twisted*, Studio 3DO have created a completely wacky FMV extravaganza, with a TV station over run by kids providing the infrastructure on which several enjoyable puzzle and quiz games are hung. An edutainment product for younger players, this is brilliantly executed, with amusing spoof soaps and TV shows offered as reward for winning points (translated into viewing figures). Excellent fun and not too American for British youngsters.

issue 2, Rating: ★★★

STRIKER

TBA, £TBA

When EA's *FIFA International Soccer* was released early in late 1994 few thought it would be surpassed until 3DO M2 arrived. Yet already Elite have rolled out their premier sports title, *Striker*, and it looks as though it will cause as much of a sensation as its 16bit counterpart did on the SNES. While the FMV presentation isn't up to EA's standards in-game the tables are reversed with more controllable sprites, faster action and some of the most dazzling animation



3DO Magazine has seen to date. FIFA aficionados would be right to point out the lack of camera angles and, more importantly, the absence of FIFA's six-player option, but nevertheless in one or two-player mode this gets *3DO Magazine*'s vote as the most playable footy game around.

issue 3, Rating: ★★★★

SUPER STREET FIGHTER II X

Panasonic, £60

Capcom's *Street Fighter* 2 sold more 16bit Super Nintendos than any other game. A sophisticated combat engine allowed for moves, counter-



moves and even counter-counter moves so that mastering the intricacies of the games was near impossible and the 3DO system's version is naturally the most comprehensive conversion of them all being arcade-perfect. This is one of the select group of 'must have' games, absolutely unmissable for any beat-'em-up fan.

issue 1, Rating: ★★★★

SUPER WING COMMANDER

Electronic Arts, £39.99

Origin, have re-written the original *Wing Commander* game to take account of the 3DO system's impressive hardware, replacing the drab 1940's style in-game sections with state-of-the-art FMV. The in-game graphics are now fully textured mapped and as smooth as only the 3DO system allows. The only thing that has stayed the same is Origin's insistence on a strong narrative to provide a backdrop to the action. Intelligent and action-packed – what more could you ask for, except, perhaps, *Wing Commander III*?

issue 1, Rating: ★★★★

THEME PARK

Electronic Arts, £34.99

Bullfrog's brilliantly addictive sim game set within the craaazy world of the Theme Park gives the player com-



plete control over a mass of variables, and abandons him there. Each of these variables is intricately linked – put an ice cream vendor too close to a ride, for example, and you'll have kids throwing up everywhere. A compulsive game, this will appeal to 3DO system players who want a little more than just fast, photon splitting sprites from their games. A stunning piece of entertainment, as those who enjoyed our exclusive playable demo last month will testify. Absolutely unmissable.

issue 1, Rating: ★★★★

TOTAL ECLIPSE

Crystal Dynamics, £39.99

One of the first games to have come out on the 3DO system and also one of the best, Crystal Dynamics' *Total Eclipse* generates imagery in real time on a par with anything in pre-rendered games. *Total Eclipse* allows you real freedom of movement (within a fairly wide corridor) to explore its gorgeously detailed, yet terribly hostile environment. With sublime sound FX and music, 20 levels (including terrifying tunnel sections) a wide array of weapons and brilliantly rendered enemies, this is marred only by an extraordinarily high difficulty setting. Take heart, though, for issue two of *3DO Magazine* was packed with cheats and play guides to make this mammoth blaster more approachable.

issue 1, Rating: ★★★★

TWISTED

Electronic Arts, £39.99

One of the most innovative and intriguing games for the 3DO system yet, *Twisted* uses the 3DO system's FMV capability to produce the world's first true multimedia game show. The basic objective is for you, and up to five friends, to get to the top of a spiralling staircase, tackling mental puzzles and general knowledge tests put in your way. EA have included various difficulty settings so that both the adult and the child can be catered for simultaneously. Bizarre, innovative and good fun. Fans should also check out *Station Invasion*, also developed by Studio 3DO, plus the imminent *All New People's Gameshow*.

issue 1, Rating: ★★★

VIRTUOSO

Elite, £44.99

Lambasted on its hyped PC release, this is a rather unwelcome *Doom* rip-off, with poor, digitised sprites failing to convince and dull, unimaginative backgrounds offering no inspiration. This doesn't look like a 3DO game, with even the limited *Demolition Man* 3D section offering infinitely superior visuals and gameplay. The inability to move and shoot at the same time makes *Virtuoso* irritating and virtually unplayable. An inadequate 3DO premiere for Elite.

issue 2, Rating: ★

WAIALAE COUNTRY CLUB

Panasonic, £39.99

Despite the obvious lack of courses in *Waialae Country Club*, the game still wins you over with gorgeous digitised graphics, which are much more impressive than US Gold's *World Cup* rival. Gameplay isn't quite so sophisticated though, and whilst novices will be satisfied by this slick, polished sim, serious golfers will be left wanting much more in the way of variety. Considering the space available on a CD, the course deficiency can only be blamed on laziness rather than memory restrictions, a fault that can be levelled at all the 3DO system golf software at present, sadly.

issue 1, Rating: ★★★★

WAY OF THE WARRIOR

Interplay, £39.99

Whilst the extravagant, boldly digitised characters of *Warrior* immediately inspire excitement, play reveals a relatively weak *Mortal Kombat* clone. A hard rock soundtrack blasts along with the action, and some of the backdrop designs are extraordinary, but play is awkward, controls lack an intuitive feel and close quarter combat's difficult to accomplish. Flawed fun, this has provoked heated debate amongst the 3DO fraternity. We stand by our review, but many have enjoyed this noisy beat-'em-up.

issue 1, Rating: ★★★★

WORLD CUP GOLF

US Gold, £39.99

This doesn't quite succeed in being the portentous sim to end all golfing sims it wants to be. The digitised graphics are drab and the much vaunted FMV clips of your tee-offs don't really work. However, the degree of control available over the ball is impressive, as are the enormous array of play options and tournament styles. Sadly, a lack of courses cripples this though, and the sluggish play will alienate many.

issue 1, Rating: ★★★★

3D ATLAS

Electronic Arts, TBA

A huge geographical, political and environmental guide to planet earth, this uses excellent stock footage, good 3D graphics routines and brilliantly edited news sequences to entice and seduce, and succeeds very well in creating an excitement for traditionally dull subject matters. A quiz game also lurks within the package, circumnavigation of the world through multiple choice questions providing a useful indication of just how much information you've retained. An excellent edutainment package that should service its target audience well, it could do with being joined by some similarly polished edutainment packages. Excellent.

issue 2, Rating: ★★★★

3DO Magazine



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**ACCLAIM****Corpse Killer**

A Caribbean-set, FMV heavy shoot-'em-up which requires a lightgun for best results. [Soon]

Slam City With Scottie Pippin

Another interactive movie produced in conjunction with Digital Pictures, this one has a basketball theme. [Soon]

AMERICAN LASER GAMES**Drug Wars**

Blast those drug dealers in this neat conversion of the hit arcade game. [July]

GameGun

The very fun, very orange Lightgun itself – essential to get the most out of most ALG games. [July]

Madison High

ALG's first title to be released for their new 'Games For Her' division. [TBA]

Space Pirates

Join the Star Rangers, travel to the far ends of the universe, meet strange new life forms... and shoot them with your ALG GameGun. [TBA]

ANY CHANNEL, INC.**P.O'd**

One of the most exciting games in development with cool 3D graphics and an aggressive, adult approach. Gameplay is *Doom*-style but more sophisticated with the ability to fly via a JetPack, and even engage in hand-to-hand combat. [Soon]

**ART DATA INTERACTIVE****Alien Seed**

A revolutionary new, polygon intensive extravaganza being developed especially

for M2. [1996]

Chess Wars

A *Battle Chess* for the 32-bit generation, this grafts live-action footage onto an advanced chess engine. Scripted by Paul Cooper, the winner of 3 Emmys, and costing so far half a million dollars to produce, this should be fun. [TBA]

Doom II

The phenomenally successful first-person perspective blaster is upgraded for the 3DO system complete with a brand new episode containing nine levels of new monsters and weaponry. [June]

**Doom II: Hell On Earth**

The current PC mega-hit is bound to be huge on 3DO with all new FMV, higher resolution graphics plus new creatures to interact with... check out our Art Data Interactive feature in **3DO Magazine 3** for the full story, and expect a review of this mega-game soon. [Autumn]

BMG**Ballz**

Outrageously fun MegaDrive beat-'em-up gets uprated for the 3DO system. Should be a big hit. [July]

DOMARK**Flying Nightmares**

State-of-the-art sim based around the Harrier jumpjet. Unbelievably sophisticated and gorgeous visuals. [July]

ELECTRONIC ARTS**Foes Of Ali**

Stunning 3D texture-mapped graphics allow you to recreate Ali's amazing

career in the best boxing sim ever. [TBA]

NHL '96

The hugely popular 16bit ice hockey sim is spectacularly converted to the 3DO system. Using the same Virtual Stadium technology as *FIFA*, it's likely to be completely awesome. [Summer]

Psychic Detective

An interactive movie... [June]

PGA Tour Golf

Likely to be the very best golf game there has ever been. [TBA]

Syndicate

Hugely atmospheric and entertaining, this classic cyberpunk blaster will stretch both your mind and your trigger finger. [May]

Space Hulk

A raved over shoot-'em-up cum strategy hybrid based on the famous board game. Brilliantly upgraded for the 3DO system, it plays like you're in *Aliens*. [June]

Wing Commander 3

The most expensive video game ever made with stunningly smooth FMV, and dazzling 3D in-game action. Stars Mark 'Luke Skywalker' Hamill. [Soon]

ELITE**Power Slide**

A 3D rallying game with the emphasis on realism. [June]

Space Ace

Dragon Lair's more varied, slightly more playable arcade sequel comes to 3DO. [July]

ENTERTAINMENT INT.**Braindead 13**

Developed by Readysoft, the people

behind *Space Ace*, this features more extraordinary FMV cartoon graphics. [Summer]

GOLDSTAR**Defcon V**

A stunning looking space adventure strategy game. [Autumn]

Primal Rage

Time-Warner's hit arcade beat-'em-up features some impressively OTT characters. [Winter]

GAMETEK**Hell**

A cyberpunk adventure starring none other than Dennis Hopper as Mr Beautiful. Grace Jones co-stars, along with femme fatale, Stephanie Seymour. A sure-fire hit? [May]

**Baldies**

An action/strategy game in the mould of *Theme Park*. [June]

INFOGRAPHES**Alone In The Dark 2**

More of the same superb stuff, only bigger and even better, with lots more combat. [1996]

Alone In The Dark 3

The final installment. This time set in the Wild West (in a ghost town no less). [1996]

INTERPLAY**Cyberia**

A Silicon Graphic pre-rendered shoot'em up in the *StarBlade* mould. Looks stunning. [TBA]

Clay Fighters

A brilliantly quirky fighting game using the highly distinctive graphic technique, Claymation. An awesomely big release. [TBA]

Casper

A game based upon the Spielberg film version of the classic cartoon, due for release sometime this summer. [TBA]

Kingdoms

400Mb of FMV is brilliantly integrated into a classic adventure. Sequels are already being planned, as is a coin-op version. [TBA]

Waterworld

Another tie-in, this one based on a movie whose 'star' should be the film's special effects, despite performances from Kevin Costner and Dennis Hopper. [TBA]

KIRIN ENTERTAINMENT**The Grandest Fleet**

Another PC classic gets upgraded for the 3DO. [August]

The Perfect General

The popular PC strategy game reworked for the 3DO with the addition of 3D rendered sequences and stereo sound. [May]

KRISALIS**StarFighter 3000**

Based upon the hit Archimedes game, this hugely promising title promises to be a Defender for the Nineties. Graphics are 3D, texture mapped and very fast, while missions range from sinking enemy fleets to protecting allied squadrons. [Xmas]

MECC**DynoPark Tycoon**

A variation on the *Theme Park* concept with dinosaurs instead of rollercoasters to manage. [Spring]

MAGNET STUDIOS**Icebreaker**

A sci-fi action-strategy game. [TBA]

MINDSCAPE**Dragon Lore**

A mythological adventure with stunning, pre-rendered graphics from Cryo. [August]

Panzer General

Superb, in-depth gameplay from strategy masters SSI. Raved about on the PC, if you like strategy games, you'll love this. [Soon]

PANASONIC**BIOS Fear**

An ecologically minded strategy game with the player in charge of preserving

Earth's last resources. [Summer]

Daedaleus Encounter

Quite possibly the best FMV heavy, 'interactive movie' there's yet been. Starring 'mega babe' Tia Carere, it promises much eye candy, but gameplay? Wait and see... [Soon]

**Fun 'n' Games**

An odd-ball compilation of classics, allegedly. [Spring]

Seal of the Pharaoh

Mediocre Japanese, first-person perspective RPG recently re-dubbed for the American market. [TBA]

Wicked 18

Panasonic's slick golf engine gets reused for another round of 18. [Spring]

PONY CANYON**F1GP**

An officially endorsed, Japanese F1 racing sim with some intriguing texture-mapped 3D. Looks promising. [TBA]

**RENEGADE**

Several titles are under active consideration for conversion, with an adventure game currently heading the most likely list.

RUNANDGUN!, INC**Duellin' Fireman**

A spectacular looking 50:50 mix of arcade action and interactive movie, it's described as an action adventure comedy with plenty of energy and set in weird, mutated environment. Should be good fun. [Summer]

SIERRA

An early 3DO backer with the disappointing *Draxon's Revenge* and fun puzzler *Incredible Machine* now released officially. Future releases such as a conversion of *Red Baron* are still under consideration.

SEPCTRUM HOLOBYTE**Star Trek: The Next Generation**

A truly epic project which has been in development for over a year. Purposefully designed for the 3DO system, it's got stunning 3D graphics and a unique game structure that threatens to blow away any *Star Trek* fan. [TBA]

**STUDIO 3DO****BattleSport**

The game that should bring the arcade crown to the 3DO. A two-player shoot'em-up in the style of *Cyber Sled* it's super-fast, stunning to look at, brilliant to play and still months off release. Expect massive things. [TBA]

Blade Force

Heli-Pak wearing vigilante roams the streets in 2110 – or should that be flies through the streets. Stunning 3D and lots of action. [August]

**Captain Quazar**

Based on a popular cartoon character, this has a wonderful comic feel with our hero out to bust intergalactic criminals. The isometric graphics are great. [TBA]

Killing Time

An abandoned island is the site for some frantic, *Doom*-style action with stunning graphics. Early sightings look very impressive with monstrous amounts of gore – blood and guts spurting out of bullet ridden bodies. This really does look unbelievably impressive. [Summer]

**Phoenix 3**

An intriguing sci-fi action/adventure set

on the planet Galearth. You must repel enemy invaders by finding pilots, hidden ships and lots of blasting. [TBA]

Zhadnost the People's Party

Post-communist gameshow likely to be somewhat akin to the multimedia extravaganza *Twisted*. Expect weird puzzles, general knowledge questions with an American bias, and much, much more. [Spring]

TAITO**Pyramid Control**

Originally a Laserdisc title *Pyramid Control* spools most of its graphics off disc with shoot-'em-up arcade action overlaid on top. [Soon]

VIRGIN**Dragon**

A hyper-violent *Street Fighter 2* clone with the difference that there can be up to three mean mother fighters upon the screen simultaneously. Originally released to rave reviews on the Super Nintendo. If you like your beat-'em-ups in any shape or form this looks a more than promising release to anticipate. You'll see it here first. [June]

Lost Eden

An epic adventure, featuring dinosaurs and mankind unrealistically co-operating in mystical prehistoric times. A Cryo production, *Lost Eden* should be a gorgeous-looking production with masses of FMV. [May]

Heart Of Darkness

Another World for the 32-bit, 3DO dominated next generation, first impressions suggest an absolutely stunning looking – and playing game. One to look out for. [Autumn]

11th Hour

The sequel to the million selling CD-ROM extravaganza, *7th Guest*. Release (on PC) has been put back several times now which suggests that Virgin want it to be something special when it's released later this year. Fantastic, CD-streamed adventure with a horrific bent, *11th Hour* will have either a 15 or 18 certificate upon release and will scare the pants off you. [TBA]

VIRIDIS CORPORATION**Dreamer**

A super-secret 3D game. What else can we say? [TBA]

'Project X'

And yet another super-secret 3D game with no details disclosed. [TBA] □

next issue

3DO
Magazine

3DO/5

With every new **3DO release**, an **M2 update**, Los Angeles **E3 show report** plus all the regular features, previews and interviews that make up your favourite 3DO read, **3DO Magazine •5** is guaranteed to be an extraordinary experience, penned in for the **27th of July**. Don't be late, the future's waiting...

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